

HINDU...?

411

Dr. B. L. ZUTSHI

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HINDU with the sign of interrogation is the book—a step aside—unlike books written on Hindu and Hinduism, that gravitate around a set of thinking, repeating the past in a impressionist mood in terms of one's opinions, likes and dislikes. Actually, it is a book on "Asian Spirituality" whose fountain happen to be India and the word Hindu epitomizing that consciousness. The writer is neither an orthodox trying to apply the old texts to support the existing order and ignoring all that goes against it nor he is a heterodox, busy in giving new interpretations to the old texts.... In his consciousness, the writer is neither Dogra nor Kashmiri Pandit nor Muslim nor Christian nor Sikh but a "man speaking to man" something which all are in essence and evolving to realize as a common destiny of mankind... So one need not be scandalized by the mention of the word Hindu. Karl Marx called Bahadur Shah Zafar the last Hindu king of India—meaning Indian.... In the word Hindu, the writer professes something new, as the logical outcome of its five letters, something invariably true of the Indian consciousness. It is a cryptic word, so mysteriously remote, and so mysteriously near that nothing can be said of a man who enters and lives in its mystery. He may be a follower of one religion or the other or no religion, yet as long as he is a man thinking he cannot help to aspire to be and become more than a man bound in the shackles of caste, community, religion and creed. What a Professor professes can be felt and experienced by men of sense all over the world who come with a heart that "watches and receives." To the man of sense there is nothing sectarian, religious and orthodox in the word Hindu. In it is the force of intuition and inner experience averse to intolerant mental exclusions that disappear at the dawn of cosmic consciousness, binding humanity and Nature in a bond of relationship and love. Such a cosmic consciousness of the word Hindu is "towards which the mind of the west is only now reaching with much fumbling and difficulty."

सारदा पुस्तकालय

(संभावना सा. द. केंद्र)

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PREFACE

HINDU with a sign of interrogation, in its approach and vision is a book step aside from the books written on Hindu, and Hinduism that gravitate around a set thinking by repeating the past in an impressionist mood in terms of one's opinions, likes and dislikes. Actually it is a book on "Asian spirituality" whose fountainhead is India and the word Hindu epitomises that consciousness. The writer as an educator transcends all communal affiliations as he belongs to all communities. He cannot teach or educate others unless he has first taught and educated himself. So he is neither an orthodox trying to apply the old texts to support the existing order and ignoring all that goes against it nor he is a heterodox, busy in giving new interpretations to the old texts. His is a teacher's vision and outlook to see that any blind adherence to tradition is truth's greatest obstacles. Nor is he an ascetic or mystic calling men to disgust with the world by pointing to the temple, the monastery as the only place for finding God. Nor is the writer a kind of a rationalist arguing that this world is a mistake, therefore it is better to put God and religion aside. Just as the judgment of literature is the reward of many years of labour, so after long study, meditation and reflection, the image of Hindu that looms large in the mental horizon is not what vituperations of critics label it or make of it. Even what people worship here is a fringe of the consciousness condensed in the five letters of the word HINDU. It is like the five-lettered word ISLAM, that too, to the reflective gaze is not what people talk of it or those who pay lip-service to it and militate peace; but other than what people have made it and what is practiced is only a millionth part of the vast tracks of peace embodied in the word ISLAM. For, the word in its dynamic aspect is not simply a form to which people tenaciously cling but what makes form alive and what penetrates thought that the form represents and suggests. Therefore, HINDU is with a sign of interrogation on what has been labelled, upheld and talked about of the word with myriad associations.

The writer comes to you as a "man speaking to men," inviting his fellow

brothers in the adventure of thought in which the past and the present are stepping stones to our march towards the dazzling noons of the future that shall surpass the glimmering dawns that went before. The Hindu with an interrogation (?) is an adventure through strange seas of thought alone. One need not be scandalized by the mention of the word Hindu. Karl Marx called Bahadur Shah Zafar as the last Hindu king of India—meaning Indian. We should take this word in this sense if we are to embark on an adventure into the consciousness of the word Hindu, All-Kana i.e. all mankind marching towards the bright future. Hindu, the uncanny word teases those out of thought who are westernized Hindustani, or those who approach it with a conditioned mind full of borrowed opinions and personal prejudices to mean by it what suits their narrow domestic, communal and political interests. The word is of portmanteau meaning. The five letters are so mystically arranged as to evoke layers of meaning, evocations and suggestions transcending the local and communal colours that tarnish its fairy face with ugliness. The writer found it a Word that comes to business and bosom of humanity. To an impartial scrutiny, the first three letters (HIN) link themselves with the humanity in a process of evolution gripped in a transition due to the ignorance and the prevailing law of Inconscience. Humanity in Ignorance of Nature is what HIN means in the pragmatic sense on an empirical level heading towards the destiny pointed out by the last two letters (DU) of the word. It is DU the Divinity in man and the emerging Universal consciousness towards which evolutionary nisis is leading mankind for the birth of a global family, the multiple expression of underlying unity.

India is the epitome of humanity in that the Hindu or Hindustani is not of one hue or uniform in nature and temperament. It is a dome of many colours that stains the white radiance of eternity. The cryptic word Hindu or Hindu + ism is an adventure of infinite soul in man. As such, it is so mysteriously remote and so mysteriously near that not a word can be said of a person who enters into its vast and complex consciousness. Reason being that it presents no set of dogmatic creeds or set of social rules. It does not denote any religion based on a book revolving around a person or persons. In it is silhouetted the soul's infinity containing multitudinous and multifarious cosmos of creeds and experiences to manifest a landscape of gigantic diversity with a secret similarity within each variant in a relationship and love that:

"No sister flower would be forgiven,
If it disdained its brother."

If Hindu, the nucleus of *Dharma*, the law that binds and joins is not universal it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can "live only for a limited purposes" but the law or the Dharma is timeless principle that arranges time in sequence of cause and effect. It is universal also in the sense that it triumphs over materialism including and anticipating the discoveries and speculations of philosophy, insisting every moment on the truth, which all the religions acknowledge. Thus Hindu is a compendium of values in the ordering of progressive upward march of humanity. By humanity we mean "the universal manifesting in human race," evolving through life and mind to the ultimate divine aim. The men of sense all over the world are likely to discover in the cryptic word Hindu an image of an evolving homosapien, who is at present ignorant of himself and inconscient of the working of the Nature which he recklessly destroys to give every reason to lament "what man has made of man." Stuck in a stage of transition, humanity is not complete, as it is yet in a process of evolution, struggling to complete and perfect itself. The writer a student-scholar of English literature writes in the international language that enshrines the soul of humanity, the impetus, the hope and aspirations of generations. Unlike westernized Hindustanis, the writer assimilates all that is noble in the western culture and appreciates its technological progress without hating all that is Hindu or Hindustani. The westernized elite of India dislike to be called Hindu and in their one-sided approach they deny the light and wisdom of Hindu spirituality. These so-called elite, the imitators of the west are also the part of humanity ruled in general by the principle of inconscience. They are only in the (HIN) rudimentary state of evolution. Perhaps, in their pride they do not see that Hindu means to know and realize the real nature of man who is potentially divine all over the world. Their potential Divinity is yet to evolve to the level of universal consciousness for which India and Indians stand. Their following western standards and values, their attempts to model India on a Marxist-Socialist pattern to suit its atheistic and anti-national orientation shall make no difference to the meaning and nature of Hindu or in any way effect its being an evolving and growing image of Humanity.

The so called Westernized Hindus engaged in criticizing, condemning, complaining, do not have time and patience to appreciate rationally that Hindu is not a particular sect, but all men, humanity at large and not a fixed and stale dogma; but an image of man growing steadily, coming out of the Ignorance and Inconscience of itself and Nature to scale further the stages of evolution. Hindu or any human being cannot condemn or criticise others without injuring oneself. For throwing dust into the eyes of God is to blind oneself. That is the Law. To call Hindu fascist, backward, fundamentalist is to exhibit the height of foolishness. Those who are prone to derisive tone, assume that Hindu is a segregated small chunk of people divided and torn apart by castes and creeds are likely to miss the magic mystery of human life and Nature enshrined in this elusive five-lettered word. Its unthinkable power and perennial beauty like mist over mountain driven, is revealed when we divest it from cults and creeds, persons and forms, books and temples and see in it the pent up flame of human aspiration for Love and Life and Light and Laughter.

The Chapter I—Hindu with a sign of interrogation (?) interrogates the name Hindu as a static entity to be labeled this or that community weighed down by a ritual fuss and confusion of dogmas. The attempt of the writer is not to exalt any religion, community or race; but to make men of sense see that it presents an evolving picture of humanity in becoming what it is in potentially as suggested by the last two letters of the Word. It is an attempt of man-thinking, searching for Universal Values, a wide Consciousness of Thought that rejects nothing as much as assimilates all that is best in the world. Yet, it has an aspiration to transcend all narrow domestic and national walls to know what humanity is destined to become. So, Hindu is not what people worship here, as much as an attitude of the spiritualized mind that makes worship a living revelation of truth of human life and existence revealed by "ways that the learned understand not." It is a word of spontaneous fellow-feeling, a sense of solidarity, a beacon of significance that alone embraces the temple, the mosque, the church, synagogue in one passionate embrace; to make all religions lose their communal and racial character and become light and knowledge, love and peace in which there is no duality or separation but the joy of that unifying presence. The significance of the

word is revealed in the way it condenses the past of human civilization in terms of the present evolution heading towards a mighty future.

Even though one be a follower of this or that religion, affiliated to any party; yet if one is a man of sense, he or she cannot deny being a human being (HIN), like rest of humanity, inscient and ignorant of his real nature and the mystery of Nature encircling him or her. In this understanding of the nature of man he shares the common destiny with humanity, which is definitely to rise above the ignorance of the lower nature to the heights of DU, the divinity in man and Nature, the golden thread that garlands the colourful humanity in the garland of universal brotherhood. We may tenaciously cling to communal cults and creeds, call ourselves Brahmin, Sikh, Muslim, Christian, Mahajan, Shudra and so on; we are mortal human beings, have the same heart to beat, same emotions of joy and sorrow, have same imperfections and limitations that the body and the mind impose on us and challenge to struggle and exert for the destiny which is to fulfil and perfect ourselves. Such is the *raison de etre* of the word Hindu with a sign of interrogation. It is not what people think and talk about or call themselves. The first task of human being is to become truly human, before it is possible to rise from the human to the glory of his innate Divinity. Man, as a man is a mental being who unlike animals can think, discriminate what is right and what is wrong. On the anvil of the discrimination is patterned his destiny. His move towards the universal consciousness depends on his right thinking. As we know from Emerson, "hardest thing is to think," and it is thinking that builds his future thought by thought. Therefore, thought is another name for fate. Man is his own tragedy and comedy. Fate and free will are reverse and obverse of the same energy, which puts forth forces that make or mar his destiny. This is the purport of the Chapter II of the Book. In the Chapter III, the education becomes a mode of Sadhana, emphasising the need of a new approach to it in the emerging global society, an educational process to be pursued whole-heartedly with a rigour of scientific discovery and invention to build knowledge upon knowledge that leads man out of darkness of ignorance and inconstience to the light of true happiness. The educational sadhana is the only means — far better than religions that divide humanity in sects and groups — to accelerate the process of evolution, shorten its tardy process so that the soul of

humanity like a bud bursts open its heart and makes its way towards a divine manhood.

Hindu—All Khana i.e. all mankind as epitomized by India, in the form of Brahmin, Sikh, Muslim, Christian, Ksatriya, Vaish, Shudra, etc are diverse colours of humanity. The Chapter Kashmir Unsecularised finds its antidote in the Chapter Sat Guru Baba Nanak; a unique blend of spirituality and secularism, in that it reveals the truth of existence that Hinduism and Islam are two forces like two arms (Bhalla-Maradana) of the Reality as epitomized in the person of Sat Guru Baba Nanak. After all, all "problems of existence are problems of harmony." The word Hindu sweeps the string and sings of humanity becoming Divinity; the Divinity gradually—in spite of the opposition of the sons of Darkness—is manifesting through humanity. The word Hindu is a virtue of Harmony. In it:

H stands for Harmony.

I stands for In or Infinite.

N stands for Nature.

This 'Harmony' is veiled by our ignorance and our being inconscient of the conscious-Force working in and through Nature. It can be discerned when we rise above name and form, tear the masks that disfigure the fairy face of humanity. What remains after tearing all coverings, is the pure truth, the flame of divine consciousness, the vision of Infinite in Nature. Harmony cannot be brought from outside. It is our perception of Divinity hidden in man, expressing through the forms of Nature. Islam, the religion of peace like five-letter word Hindu, reveals in its core of heart to the discerning eye as five stages of human evolution:

I is suggestive of the Infinite.

S stands for the Soul the candle of the Infinite

L Living Light of the Limitless

A Attainment or to become the living light of the Limitless

M Man, first has to become Mard-e-Moumin and then evolve to be Mard-e-Kamil to Mard-e-hur and eventually: Darwash-e-Khuda-Mast i.e. divinity embodied in Humanity, the Divine-intoxicated Man.

The education as a mode of Sadhana has the power to kindle in the soul the light of infinite consciousness. It depends on attainment of the status of Mard-e-Kamil, which is conditional on one's earnest thought, pure action and surrender to the Infinite and the Limitless. Even the six letters in the word MUSLIM stand (from occult point of view) for perfection of divine creation. This is possible only when we follow the intrinsic meaning of the six letters and what they stand for :

- M stands for Man.
- U stands for Universal.
- S stands for Soul.
- L stands for Light of the Limitless.
- I stands for In.
- M stands for Mard-e-Moumin and Mard-e-Kamil.

It is the cultivated power of thought that 'draws out' (the true meaning of education) the Soul to come in the front as the Leader of the way as the light of the Limitless, to lead mankind from darkness to light, make man realize and express that beauty of light in his daily thoughts and acts as Mard-e-Moumin. The first M in the six-lettered word is the man ruled by ignorance, the infra-humanity governed by its instincts and dominated by its desires. It is to be raised to the Mard-e-Moumin level of moral and spiritual status as "a perfect human world cannot be created or composed of men, who are themselves imperfect." This is what India stands for. This is true Hindustani way of life and the vision of existence and human life.

The chapter, The Ideal of Indian Nationalism shows that India as a Nation epitomises the second step of man's consciousness towards a world union, the earth as one Nation of complex character. Nationalism as an emerging sense of global consciousness in man, brews an illumined feeling that "my country is universe—*Savdesho bhuvantriyaṁ*." This is the real freedom and slogan "*Hamay Azadi Chaheye*," means that freedom is a joy of interdependence and not an isolation or separation. To be Hindu or Hindustani is to enjoy freedom in taking to its bosom all that God has created. It is to be catholic and synthetic, liberated from such narrow-minded fanatic zeal to "convert all souls to one type and to confine the

illimitable and protean Spirit to a single formula and a solitary revelation." Why? Because, Hindu or Indian consciousness proper is spiritual life abundant, Life abundant whether spiritual or secular, cannot exist for long in a "one-track system." The genuine Indian consciousness is recognition of the non-uniformity of human nature and attempts to make the non-uniformity work with utmost efficiency as:

Nothing in the world is single,
And things by law divine,
In one another's mingle,
Why not I with thine.

The real freedom is in spiritual-secularism, the principle that sees Divinity in all and all in Divinity. This is practically worked out by the intervening presence of Sat Guru Baba Nanak—the Avatar of spiritual secularism. This Divine intervention always comes like light out of darkness at the crucial turn of earth's history when the crisis of the arrested humanity reaches a point of climax. This then, is the *raison d'être* of the intervention, presented in the phenomenon of Incarnation as a parable of evolution. It shows that humanity stuck in the mud of ignorance and inconscience, threatened to destruction by the hostile forces, cannot move forward to its divine destination without the Divine's intervention to break the rock of Inconscience holding the stream pent up in its dense Inertia. The intervention of Gurus and Sages from time to time does not allow the life of liberty, which India envisages to be sabotaged by the invaders who hate to live and let people live in a life of co-existence. These apostles of peace are the missionary souls that come with a flaming sword of Knowledge to carve way for the golden river's song of unity in diversity and show how men of different creeds live together to make one single nationality. They do not come to uphold any community, establish a new sect or believe in the superiority of this or that religion. Untouched by any political, territorial and commercial ambitions, the Gurus of universal brotherhood exhort us to live in peace or Islam, the peace that passeth understanding. Islam or peace and no doctrinaire narrowness breeding hatred is most needed for the development of true national genius embodying the common world consciousness that is trying everywhere to emerge. The Divine

intervention is a battle for Light, to liberate mankind out of the clutches of the Sons of Darkness—represented by Falsehood, Ignorance and Inconscience in the world. Hence, comes the relevance of the Gita for the present bewildered humanity, struck with fear and uncertainty in this world of rush and anxiety. The Gita about which Warren Hastings spoke with prescience: "When the British Empire is lost in oblivion, when the sources of wealth and prosperity are not remembered, this scripture and the lessons it contains will continue to inspire millions of people in this world;" is not a "war-mongering book," but the Song Celestial of Sir Edwin Arnold. *Kurukshetra* is not a battlefield of ambitious war-mongering warlords, but a '*dharm-kshetra* where a battle for Light, battle for Truth and righteousness is fought. It is a battle fought for Divine Democracy in which right ought to be might and the warriors who jump into the field are soldiers of Light fighting without ego and desire. In the chariot of the body whose reins are in the hands of the Divine seated within is driving through fury and storm of the bloody battle to the victory. In this battle for Light, the killer who kills and the person being killed are the same and the victory that ensues is the common destiny of mankind.

It is high time for us to de hypnotize our minds from all conditionings, change our attitude and hear the clarion call of the magic-word Hindu. It goads for a new psychology to be created among the people. Otherwise, there are apprehensions that the arrested humanity regresses into a realm of tragedy. The crisis in which humanity is gripped can reach a point of climax, when it is impossible to retrace the steps. Humanity is at a stage of transition, and "all transitions" in the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan, "belong to the realm of tragedy." This battle for Light is fought both within the man and outside him. It is impossible to avert the Fate that is the outcome of our thought, as we build our future thought by thought. It is not by increasing development of external paraphernalia that the crisis can be averted or resolved. Its resolution lies in the inward perception of the inmost Divinity in man that activates and releases the moral and spiritual forces. The new psychology or the true psychology is a scientific cultivation of this perception of Divinity in man and Nature.

The elusive word Hindu means the science and art of realizing and manifesting the Divine hidden in man and Nature. This law of Equality

makes all equal in a world of relatedness, to enjoy equitable sharing of Earth's production as what mother is to child, the earth is to all. Equal opportunities according to one's need and capacity is to set the law of Equality in operation for a collective Life that harmoniously arranges itself in a pattern that each one's work is a rhythmic beat according to each one's capabilities, interests and needs of the psychological growth, with enough leisure to grow inwardly and enjoy simple but rich life. This is the picture of growing Hindu-Consciousness, a birth of new Psychic awareness and knowledge that utilizes the various instruments of power—political, economic, social, cultural, religious—not for division, opposition and domination; but for the generation of unfailing good-will and sincerity to collaborate in the divine task of healing the wounds of the bleeding earth. It is not a task light and easy but a battle for Light, a dynamic action of divine power that alone can transform the "mephistophelean stuff that world is" and kindle the flame of immortality in man "wrapped in mortal poverty."

This is what the meditative-gaze and the flashes of the intuition can reveal in the pent up five-lettered word Hindu or the magic word Islam. Whatever little study of different religions and philosophies the writer has made, he feels himself yet a child playing at some beach of an unknown sea, silent and deep, watching the dynamic play of countless forces that make our cosmos. It is the Professor's experience for the generations to awaken people to independence and freedom, which implies using our own ears and eyes on every occasion and then judge what is written for the enlightenment of all. Real independence and freedom demands that we should not judge any work of thought through the opinion of others. The more a man stands above this weakness of being hypnotized by others; the freer he is. The writer wishes readers to read this book through their own intellect to form their own judgments, as from behind all reasoning and science, humanity speaks her will and writes a page of history.

The writer's humility constrains him to remain always indebted to the great Saints, Gurus, Sufis, and Thinkers of the world. It is their grace that has worked the miracle of writing the book on the controversial, twisted and tortured word out of recognition. I owe these divine beings immense gratitude. I do not feel myself the doer of action. Above all, it is my Mother-

Master, Sri Aurobindomira, the two-in-one that awakened in me the courage and confidence to heave my heart to mouth. The two-in-one is the fountain source of inspiration, so the writer meekly dedicates with devotion this book to the Two-in-One as one offers flowers at the altar of Divinity. Let this be for the good and happiness of humanity and let Mother India's

"Sons and daughters in love unite,
And make them do their duty aright.
Fill them with knowledge ever true,
And let their virtue shine anew.

Amen.

Chapter - I

HINDU... ?

I love to be a professor, a teacher in whom teaching and learning moves together. In this teaching learning process when the studies are processed through reflection and years contemplation there comes a "mellow fruitfulness" to be shared with others on equal terms as a fellow human being with common destiny. A professor "ought to be a yogi," a person belonging to no political party, affiliating himself to no religious creed or caste or community as he belongs to all and lives through all. Therefore, whatever a teacher experiences and learns cannot be kept back. His nature constraints him to heave his heart to mouth and communicate his experiences for humanity to think, discriminate, decide and re-pattern a new form and structure of life and thought. In sharing the experiences, the professor comes before us—not as a politician or a social reformer or a religious fanatic—as a learner, an educationalist and as Wordsworth has it "a man speaking to men." What he speaks concerns all men alike who enjoy the same air they breathe. For him the whole world is a school and Nature wears a mysterious look. He reads page after page of this cryptic book, educates himself to educate others. As his religion is education i.e. to draw out what is latent or potential in man; he is accustomed to love principles more than forms; value truth more than persons, status and wealth. So he is to abide by the age-old dictum: "Truth alone triumphs in the long run."

When we cast a penetrating gaze at the ebb and flow of the present scenario of national life, we find it torn with conflicts. Its shattered and loop-sided economy is the outcome of the time-bound and opportunist policies of the divided leadership. The so-called leadership is engulfed and overpowered by the selfish politicians, the hungry businesses men who exercise their power to mismanage country's finance and capital formation to their advantage. We feel ourselves helpless, shudder with pain and anger as soon as we find ourselves, as Shaw has observed, "stricken with helplessness in the face of a system that has passed beyond

our knowledge and control." It has long since begun its work of perversion, distortion and destruction of the age-old values and principles of the Nation's tradition and the culture of its people. The 'dharma' or principle of social life, the imperatives of individual welfare and growth have been replaced by the egocentric life of arrogance, selfishness and a demonic hunger for wealth, power, sex and belly-cheer. In such conditions, we are in a fix to know who and what Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian is as all are sailing in the same boat. To be Hindu or Muslim one has to be first a true human being. In this divided inheritance men are neither completely animals nor true human beings but struggling in between, and often don't we witness men becoming worse than animals when the beast dominates them? In every sphere of human activity, almost in every administrative establishment, in every educational setup the corruption is at rife. The greed for wealth and pelf, thirst for power and position have become the order of the day, a mark of prestige, the master-passion of people (who call themselves Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and so on) and their sole motive-force and objective in life. Criminally conditioned people employ complex and twisted means of varying order to throw dust into the eyes of society, while the upholders and maintainers of Law do not—perhaps dare not—penetrate their hideouts of red-light cozy resorts and underground clubs. For such people the high sounding words like Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, God, Secularism, religion or tolerance are mere pragmatic tools in furthering their narrow selfish interests. They play upon the religious feelings, communal sentiments, regional loyalties to divide masses to fortify their position and party for money power and administrative control. Ah! "Among a people generally corrupt," warned Edmund Burke, "liberty cannot long exist." Perhaps, it shall be too late for them to realize that success in a corrupt society is a transitory thing and Nemesis is bound to overtake them. They do not know that:

"The God of Wrath, the God of Love are one,
Nor least He loves when most He smites."

- Sri Aurobindo: *'Epiphany*

When such people, in their vociferous eloquence come forward as religious reformers to side with this or that bogie, I (the common man) stand confused and wonder-struck to ask: "What do they mean by Hindu or Muslim or Sikh or Christian and how they are justified to call themselves

Hindu or Muslim or Sikh or Christian?" How often, it has been observed that at the sight of women and gold their mouths water as in the presence of pickle and the consuming flames of passion start burning them. The greed for possession and enjoyment make them frantic and devilish in their designs and dealings. Yet they call themselves Hindu! Is it not a disgrace to the Word itself? Is not it better as Dr. Radhakrishnan points out to "welcome atheism if it would cleanse our lives of corrupt practices?" Again, when a criminal politician takes to the politics, he acts as the agent of Darkness lurking in the collective Inconscience of humanity to divide and rule by giving communal colour to his political philosophy of hate and violence:

"Aping to the thought the shining Friend and Guide,
Opposing in the heart the eternal Will."

—Savitri: B2-C8.

The spiritually secular Hindu (as we shall see) is humanity imprisoned in the modes of Nature, yet growing and educating itself to be more than a getting and spending man; exceeding its limitations imposed by the collective inconscience and ignorance that rule the world. The word Hindu enshrines mystery. It is not what people know about it, or what some glibly speak of it, or what the priest and politics make of it? Who and what are Hindu or Muslim? Can there be a Hindu or Muslim without being a human being 'wrapped in mortal poverty'? Does it mean both are mortal human beings? Is not the power behind body and mind; neither this nor that but the same only coloured by our conditioned thinking? In every form the blood and its colour are same, yet it can be a bad blood and good blood. Is not every one living in this land, the son of the land, a human being caught in the cobwebs of Ignorance and Inconscience; yet a "god in ruins," evolving and struggling to widen his egoistic individual and communal consciousness into the universal awareness of 'each in all' and 'all in each'?

Who is Hindu? Is he, who calls himself Hindu? Is it possible that by calling oneself Hindu, one can become Hindu? Then calling a rose by any other name, the flower would lose its fragrance and nature. A man getting up late after the sun rise, removes his hangover with a strong bed tea; then, after bickering and bandying taunts with his wife and others, moves leisurely to his office to play patience with time, devising

short cuts and unprincipled ways to corrupt the official decorum, delay the work, twist the rules to suit his greed of amassing wealth by all foul means. Can such a person be called Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, even though he puts on all the religious marks around his body; visits all the holy places and gives away a fraction of the corrupt money in charity funds? That is the great question mark? Are not there persons amongst us who chant 'Ram, Ram' many times a day, yet they are not what they feign to be? They are to recall Shakespeare, "serpent hearts hid in a flowering smile." At home they are different and dramatic. Their lip-sympathy and show of love is ceremonious, skin-deep and selfish. Outside their family circle, they abide by the prudent dictum of Oscar Wilde: "Three is company and two is none." Again, when such people pose themselves great selfless reformers, we cannot suppress our laughter. They are very ingenious and like Asura quote the authority of 'Shastras' to justify and defend their egoistic ambitions. They twist and play on the religious sentiments of people for political and commercial purposes; entangle the organic life of the nation in the Mandir-Masjid controversy and rock the ship of the country in the stormy tides of anarchy and disintegration. Is not it unfortunate and a great blot on the culture and spiritual wisdom we inherit and profess? Are not they blessed that have not seen and yet have believed?

Can a woman be called Hindu if she delights in belly-cheer, dreams of physical pleasures, luxury and the new cuts in fashions, changing her mind like the changing seasons in this world bazaar where everything is bargained for money? Women, visiting temples to indulge in idle chit-chat, character assignation, going to sadhus and fakirs and pirs to be corrupted with their mumbo-jumbo religious fuss hardly deserve to be called Hindu. Does not Hindu lady carry in her person some such light of innocence, the power of sacrifice, flowering grace of virtue called beauty; that make her an image of worship for Gods and men alike?

Let us examine the thing within the restricted social frame work of the local temper, a mode of thinking and behaviour, in which the writer's sensitivity was nurtured, condensed, so to say into a pattern of consciousness as revealed in his thought and working. In him, Nature has worked out a synthesis of diverse elements by bringing his birth in the cool flowery-lap of Kashmir, planting in him a tiny-spark-seed of the "Saraswati Kshetra," to be grown and flowered in the soil of the city of

Temples, standing on the banks of Tawi-the rolling river that has weathered ravages of time and survived the unforeseen vicissitudes of Nature. Heat and passion, strength and courage, fearlessness and unfaltering will to conquer are the characteristic elements of people of the city of Temples. Ideally speaking, the people nestled in the vicinity of this perennial river ought to be 'passion-flowers' of the Kali Shakti or the warriors of Vashanavi-energy, the invincible vital strength and power to give a conquering might to the Wisdom and peace dragged out of Kashab Kshetra. It is so, says, Sri Aurobindo, "The brain is impotent without the right arm of strength."¹ Devoid of strength insecurity, fear, death and destruction dog, life keeping men in a ceaseless struggle for the bare survival in the conditions too hard to deal. How without the Shakti of Kali, or the grace of Durga, the golden calm, perfect peace, infinite wideness, infallible knowledge and never-failing light of Amaranth Swami or the Immortal Lord can be established on the earth level and into our physical consciousness? Without Shakti, even the greatest God is like an inanimate dead matter, a lifeless body like the people of the city of Temples bereft of the bubbling power of Divinity within. They can neither save themselves nor do anything for this insecure and terror-stricken city. What to talk of being Hindu; they do not seem to be truly rational, refined, sensible, far-sighted, cultured human beings. To be truly human that is man thinking is the first step towards becoming Hindu.

To the eye of intuition, the Jambu-dheep like 'Kashab Kshetra,' stands for the ideal. Both are two arcs of the magic-circle of Hindu-consciousness. A complete Hindu is composite of the static Divine (peace, calm and silence above and below and at the heart of storm) and the Dynamic Divine, the perpetual ordered march, change and motion, the Shakti aspect of the Reality. The two aspects of Reality are enshrined in the word Hindu in its individual essence and in the general march of humanity. In this widened circumference of consciousness is revealed the landscape of Life as a ceaseless song of many meeting lives. The writer born in the cool flowery lap of the Valley was brought up and educated in the fiercely hot and tough lap of the city of Temples; a sort of an education needed to harmonize in his person the two aspects of the One Reality. His love of Nature, fondness for meadows and woods tied his heart's strings in a knot of relationship with Bhadarwah (a gateway of paradise, that bridge's the distance between this and that) by celebrating the symbolic wedding ceremony of 'prakriti-purusha.' Like a stag he roamed through

dales, mountains and forests of pine and cedar trees; the rolling music of the mountain stream haunted him like a passion, goading him to delve deeper and listen to the resonance, a rhythmic beat of the mystery of Silence giving birth to this dynamic dance of creation as sameness in difference, a landscape of Beauty that makes all things kin and pulsating. The occult significance of beauty that Bhadarwah affords to the meditative eyes, serves a mediating link between Wisdom and Power that Kashmir and the city of Temples represent. It also drives the mist and fog of separation and division to make us delight in our being Hindu as a revelation of unity expressing in the myriad forms of creation. While, Nature that we call dumb, inert and exploit her avariciously, about which we are ignorant and indifferent, is Beauty that joins the static Divine with the Dynamic Divine. To be Hindu is to see Nature as the anchor of one's purest thought and go to her as the student goes to university. So:

"I trust her dumb and wiser brain that sees,
What our loud thoughts can never reason out,
She has her secret calls,
And works divinely behind play and sleep,
Shaping her infant powers."²

In the tough and fiery lap of Jammu, the writer's latter part of boyhood and youth was mellowed into manhood, a complex thought pattern that taught him to endure, bear the burnt of un-Hindu communal hatred of his neighbours and friends; their caste prejudices, regional feelings that still corrode the vital strength and emotional beauty of the province. Despite all jealousy, hate, injustice and ill will of the children of the city of Temple, there yet looms in the subtle physical, behind the outer pollution of the city, a living presence of Shakti that has been the writer's protection and inspiration. As Nature guides each according to the rhythm of one's soul's evolution; accordingly the writer was made to ebb and flow in the stormy tides in which the people of the region writhed and rolled. Teaching profession—unlike different administrative jobs he served—suited his solitary and meditative nature. It provided him ample time to pursue his sadhana (that he calls a mode of education) undisturbed and unnoticed by the public haunt. Ah! In the teaching profession too, he found the harlot of corruption and evil chasing the chaste footsteps of Wisdom and tearing Her golden and diamond-white

garments, robbing Her of the ornaments of truth, knowledge, fearlessness, sincerity, self-sacrifice, devotion, service, contemplation, etc. These jewels, the virtues enshrined in the India's culture are an integral part of the Hindu thinking and way of life. Alas! Where is Hindu, who instead of becoming a part of the tailor-made civilization, wears natural health and smiles and adorns himself with these jewels? The corruption puts on strange and twisted disguises; it comes before you in the masks of prominent citizens, administrators, lawyers, teachers, people working in government offices and scattered commercialized institutions of the region. These are a part of the "tales of Travesty" of Dr. Jitendra Singh about the regional politicians, the so-called social activists, traders or businessmen, self-righteous intellectuals, ambitious upstarts and retired government officials.³

While working under the pulls and pressures of a bureaucratic setup of the "prominent citizens" of the region, the writer always kept a step aside, ever cautious not to tread the beaten track of vital pleasures and material riches. He turned deaf ear to the boisterous noise of the prominent Hindus trying to persuade: "Do in Rome what the Roman does." At every painful crisis in his consciousness, the inner voice intervened, invigorating self-confidence with the magic words:

"Let not the flame die out,
Cherished from age to age,
By the poet-seers of Love."

The goal seemed shadowy and dim; yet he hammered on to make true the dream of the One who has—

"... made this tenement of flesh his own."⁴

In order:

"His image in the human measure cast,
That to his divine measure we might rise."⁵

The irony of the teacher is that he is made to live in contraries. What he studies, thinks and visualises true and noble and what he comes across in his dreary and dull intercourse with individual and collective life are poles apart, like two opposite banks of a river. On the one hand, there

is an Indian ideal of divine-man-making education and contrast to it is the prevailing system of man-corrupting education, of turning the temples of learning into the breeding places of evil.

As ill luck has it, the people of the city of Temples and those inhabiting in the surrounding villages are not only economically backward but also unawakened intellectually, to be easy prey to the opportunist leadership, playing in the hands of shrewd forces at the helm of State affairs, funded and appeased by the weak-kneed central leadership that has no power to counteract the forces of disintegration confronting in every walk of social life. As such the secular-minded Hindus of this Region have always remained tools in the hands of the leadership of communal politics thriving on the policy of divide and rule and appeasement of the power hungry politicians of the centre. The irony of Fate is that the people of the Region are gripped in a crisis, cumulatively being led to a climax by the forces ruling and dominating them. What aggravates the situation is their heavy and weary weight of inconscience and resistance to change at this crucial hour of their destiny to become the soldiers of Light of which the Bahu Fort is a symbolic expression. They are namesake Hindus, devoid of the yoga-shakti, self-sacrifice, self-control and beauty of character, knowledge and power that characterize Hindu.

The word 'Hindu' is a clarion-call of unity of man and Nature, love and peace as the word Islam suggestively embodies. The five-lettered word Hindu or Islam contains the secret of preparing man's soul for the divine consummation that has universal implication and individual application. But it is distressing to see the children of Surya-putri (the Sun-Word), led astray by the lure of money and power and pelf. The children of the soil have a unique symbol of ideal perfection of man in the Lamb-Lion image, drinking together from the same pool in peace and good will, enjoying without hatred and ill will the air they breathe. The destiny of the city of Temples is inextricably linked with the realization of this ideal. The survival of its children as civilized human beings largely depends on how far they evolve towards the realization pregnant in the word Hindu or Islam. The key to that secret treasure is contained in the harmony of Lamb-Lion image. This is the ideal of supreme harmony seen by the ancestors of this land, who first came here but the way to that secret treasure has not been found or neglected due to collective inconscience and ignorance that has scattered us in self-centered castes

and groups. The contrasting images of Lamb-Lion are from Nature and carry an "ultra terrestrial significance."⁶ It not only embodies on the terrestrial level, the realization of harmony in Nature's contraries, but also the image of Hindu as two-in-one consciousness. The quality of divinely peaceful gentleness in Hindu can be made general, operative and a well-established principle of social life, only when the meekness and innocence, love of Lamb is coupled with or endowed with the god like vital energy and courage symbolized by the Lion. It is the growth of an integral man who has harmonized soul's true and pure love with invincible vital power and strength, as-

"In peace there's nothing so becomes a man

As modest stillness and humility;

But when the blast of war blows in our ears,

Then imitate the action of the tiger."⁷

The Lamb is the purity, love, humility and beauty of innocence in human relations and expression as manifested in the play of Nature. The Lion or Tiger in us is the dormant spiritualized vital strength that gives fearlessness, confidence and protection to innocence, guard's peace and simplicity to let love and peace become living breath of social organism. In the words of K.D. Sethena, "Lamb and Tiger are like expression of the divine energy," and,

"The world's deep contrasts are but figures spun

Draping the unanimity of the One."⁸

The 'lamb' in Hindu is the sign of gods' loving kindness and path of peace." This aspect of sweetness and quietness is in connection with Lion's quality of divinely fierce strength the "terrifying complementary to the Lamb and not the sheer diabolic pole to it." According to this ideal, the child of the city of Temples ought to be an integral person, sweet, loving and innocent like lamb; a harmony of all-love and meekness also possessing the fierce and terrible force of the lion to become a veritable form Kali-Krishna consciousness.

This ideal pattern of an integral man is a synthesis of Lamb-Lion consciousness-Force. It is a re-discovered ancient principle of Arya-culture of India that ages have toiled to materialize. Unfortunately, what

we are and what we ought to be are two poles apart. Self-centered, insensitive people, drugged by the wine of Ignorance, lay bound in the slumber of 'tamas' and turn deaf ear to the call of the Time-spirit. Is not it disgusting, painful and unbearable to witness the disintegrated city of Temples narrowed and divided into small groups and sabahas of Brahmins, Rajputs, Mahajans, Harijans, Sikhs, Jains and Kashmiri Pandits? Are not all these Hindus? Then, why they hate and separate themselves? So it is, 'Hindu with a sign of interrogation?' "Jammu's mushrooming self-styled organizations," as observed by Dr Jitendra Singh, "are either corrupt or ill-reputed," living the life of sheer selfishness, make hay while sun shines by their indulgence in the "ridiculous politics of public felicitation," "projecting" themselves as "self-appointed Samaritans" (Daily Excelsior, January 31, 1997). Well, this may be good for them, suitable for their opportunist thinking—as for as money and material allurements are concerned. But the question crops up: Is the Jammu's political activism "inspired by vested interests of self-seeking leaders and sycophantic prominent citizens?" How to call them Hindu or Hindustani, when they are not truly human, rational, cultured (the first step to become Hindu)? Truly human means to be liberated from the "intrinsic slavish mentality,"⁹ the "petty opportunist within" to have enlightened selfishness by identifying themselves with the common masses. Where is the leader who can see like Swami Vivekananda, God in the poor, God in the miserable and in the downtrodden? Do these leaders claim to possess the confidence, courage and conviction to live up to the demands of the city of Temples and her ideal? If there exists such a one, then he or she is a worthy child of the city of Temples? Jammu today is "flooded with hundred of ruling party enthusiasts, self-appointed activists, self-styled intellectuals and self-acclaimed global citizens?"¹⁰ Do not their character and action mirror Jammu's defeated dignity? Yet they live in the City of Temples and call themselves Hindus and "mortgage their own conscience as well of the dignity of Jammu in return of underserved favours, out-of-the-way business permits or licenses." Does Hindu mean to do everything with the selfish motive, compromise one's self-respect for a strong commercial interest? Instead of revitalizing the ideal for which the city of Temples stands for, the un-enlightened leadership has no power and motive to guide and pattern the collective life of people of the city of Temples that continues to be a "city of feudal society" of shopkeepers, subdued and reconciled to pay obeisance to the powers. There is nothing of Hindu and

Hindu spirit in them. They are namesake Brahmins, Rajputs, Mahajans, Sikhs, Jains and others divided and separated to hate and despise each other. The chief characteristic trait of the "market-minded Jammuties" is that "they never unite," because they are "always intriguing against each other in order to pull each other down even to invoke the blessings of non-Jammuited hindu up."

To be Hindu is not so much a religious faith or profession; but to tune one's heartstrings with the vibration of Truth variously expressed as identity in separateness. It is the principle of a division of labour, in which the head (intelligence and knowledge) cannot be separated from the arms (strength and power as represented by Kshatriya). Can head and arms be separated, and cut off from the trunk and belly (Mahajan or Vaish or the business man)? Can all these parts of the body exist in peace and prosperity without Harijans, the strong pillars and the legs of the body? In this organic social body all are equal and integral parts, without which society cannot grow in Knowledge, power, prosperity and perfection. Hindu or Human being is all in one. It is my own Self in the form of Brahmin, Sikh, Muslim, Christian, and Shudra. This is to be Hindustani or the true Indian:

"From Sagar Island to Sind,
From Kashmir to Cape Comourin,
God bless ancient Hind."

Then, why so much hate, ill will, indifference, and misuse of the soul-power. Man as a man is not known by his caste or dress, but by his deeds and thoughts and soul that shine in his eyes. The city of Temples if it is to remain safe and living, it has to churn Shakti without which even Gods cannot stand. The Lamb-Lion symbol is an ideal to be realized for recovering the last glory in order to march towards the common destiny. Our Kali of unthinkable Energy is always with us. Only we need to tilt our consciousness to be worthy of Her grace. The writer (since his settling here in 1952-53) was steadily made to feel the vibration of the living Presence; that gave him release from the burden of caste, colour, creed, religion and language. In the living presence that harbours infinity the fetters that bind man fall like the burden of sins from the shoulders of the true Christian, who loves his neighbour as his self, finds kingdom of Heaven within, and in his heart of hearts aspires to be as perfect as

Father in the Heaven. Therefore, in his consciousness, the writer is neither Dogra nor Kashmiri pandit, nor Muslim nor Sikh; but something which all are evolving to realize as the common destiny of mankind. And that is the essence of the word Hindu, which are all potentially but none in actuality. Like a riddling sphinx it is a great question mark that challenges and teases us out of thought. Happily again, it is to this city of Temples, and in the ideal of Lamb-Lion symbolism the writer owes the inspiration of this book. The words and images carry in them the kindling sparks of Mother-Shakti with a prayer on the lips that the book may-to quote Shelley-quicken a new birth as:

“...from an un extinguished hearth,
Ashes and sparks my words among mankind.”

—*The West Wind.*

In the word Hindu I propose to profess something new, as the logical outcome of its five letters something invariably true of the Indian consciousness proper. It is a cryptic word, so mysteriously remote, and so mysterious near, that nothing can be said about a person who enters and lives in its mystery. He may be a follower of a religion or no religion, yet as long as he is a thinking being he cannot help to aspire, to be and become more than a man. What the writer professes can be felt, and experienced by men of sense all over the world who come with a heart that “watches and receives.” To the man of sense there is nothing sectarian, religious and orthodox in the word Hindu. It is a force of intuition and inner experience averse to intolerant mental exclusions that disappear at the dawn of cosmic consciousness, binding mankind, and Nature in a bond of relationship and love. This cosmic consciousness of the word Hindu is “towards which the mind of the west is only now reaching with much fumbling and difficulty.”¹² Out of the magic word Hindu is born the philosophy of spiritual-secularism, which means; Truth is One but realized according to one’s attitude, capacity and the stage of evolution. In spiritual secularism the song of Hindu is:

“What care I for caste and creed,

It is the Deed; it is the Deed.

What for class or what for Clan,

It is the Man, it is the Man.”

Why? Because we all are:

"Heirs of joy and love and woe,
Who is high and who is low?
Mountain, valley, sky and sea,
Are for all humanity."

Thus, we need to enter into the mystic meaning of the word containing mighty, eternal and universal truth. We shall delve into it both historically and rationally in spiritual terms; without neglecting the suggestive indefiniteness of the word that mark the principles involved in the evolution of humanity's upward march. Before we do so, let us be candid at the outset to inform the readers that the study intends to weigh, and consider the word from different angles with various perspectives. It seeks to answer the questions: who is Hindu? What is Hindu? What makes one Hindu in thought and action? How far such thought and action is a natural outgrowth of man's widening consciousness during the course of evolution? Then who is not Hindu when all humanity is moving towards a common destiny? Strictly speaking in terms of the cultural evolution of the country, and its tradition nothing is finished. The rigid impoverishing definitions given to the word to make it strictly exclusive, verge to redio-ad-absurdum, deviating from the principle upon which India as a nation was founded to be an epitome of the aspiring world. In its *raison-de-etre* Hindu is the soul of the aspiring humanity, and every human being is included in the word; therefore all are Hindu, yet no one is Hindu, as it is not finished but an evolving image of humanity mirrored in the five letters. It is something a step aside and needs an impartial look, broadmindedness, and farsighted vision to make its import clear. It is exempt from the haunt of power-politics, it eludes the clutch of those to whom world is nothing but sex and belly-cheer; it evades the grasp of the intellectuals lost in their inductive, and deductive speculations that deny what it affirms; while to those conditioned in frog-consciousness and jaundiced by communal ego, the word is horribly dreadful and shattering. Then there are agnostics, sceptics, atheists, westernised Indians whose indecisiveness, and denial hang humanity in a state of disbelief, uncertainty and nervousness that is neither good for their health nor of mankind in crisis.

It is disgusting to see westernized Hindustani deriding the word Hindu, simply because of their personal prejudice and rigid opinions. They look

at the history of India written from a western perspective. To them anything good in India only came from the West. To their shallow thought and limited understanding India's spirituality is superstition. Is not it due to the stark ignorance of the Divinity within man out of which spirituality emerges? In their blind imitation of the west they are Tagore's "rag-pickers at other peoples' dust-bin," vain in their square-hoard of knowledge they dare to judge the Vedas as a book of ritual fuss of uncivilized people worshipping elemental powers. In judging according to their coloured opinion, they are judging themselves. In their modernity they regard the Bhagavad-Gita, the "Song Celestial" of Sir Edwin Arnold, a great mystification that confused people. Under the hypnotic-spell of the English language news media these Westernized Indians label Hindu fanatic, backward, and look at a person with hate and suspicion, wafting the liberating fragrance of the mantra: *Maa Tuji Salaam*, into the sordid atmosphere of human suffering and dub him communal and fundamentalist. One's common sense cannot understand how far they are justified in labeling irrationally those highly educated persons both in the West and the East, who on the basis of their right thought uphold Hindu spirituality as it concerns with the real welfare of humanity. They value it as Frawley has it, "from a stand point of intelligence and modernity, not out of contact with the greater world."¹³ Is not this hating, and labeling such persons fundamentalists un-Hindu in spirit like a Brahmin who believes in caste rigidity, pride and arrogance? Is not this fight between a corrupt and rigid communist-socialist elite, and the upholders of the basic Hindu spirit, which sees the one invariable and indivisible divinity in every individual being and not so much (as had been deliberately brought into focus for creating the fissure and confusion in masses); the battle between the so-called modern secular liberals and backward Hindu fundamentalists? In comparison to Western religion the percentage of Hindus, whose exclusive and intolerant ideas about religion are very small?

One need not be scandalized by the mention of the word Hindu. Karl Max called Bahadur Shah Zafar as the last Hindu king of India—meaning Indian i.e. all those who live (irrespective of what they call themselves) surrounded by the Himalayas in the North and seas in the South. Chronologically, the word is comparatively later origin; coming into vogue in the 6th century, when the Persian invaders came in the North-West of India, they found the river Indus (in Sanskrit Sindu) and pronounced Sindu as Hindu, referring to the people inhabiting the east

of the river as Hindus. The 'Hindu' is the Persian rendering of the corrupt form of the word 'Sindhu.' The word Hindu simply meant people of India. It has no religious connotation. The word Hindu as people of India occurs number of times in Avesta and other Persian scriptures. Even Huen Tsang used the word with reference to the Indian people. Hindu is the name of people living in a geographical location from Kashmir to Cape Comorin, and Sagar Island to Sind with their multilingual, multi-religious culture. The life of these people is compared to the life of free movement of different rivers coming from different directions and striving for the same goal through their paths-crooked or straight. Geographically, the word Hindu is formed of HI, meaning Himalaya, and NDU i.e. Indusarover, denoting the people who inhabit the land from Himalaya in the North right up to Indus river in the South. There is no such division of Aryan-Dravidian races as concocted by the Western thinkers as there was never any Aryan invasion of India as presumed by the foreign thinkers.¹⁴

The words 'Hinduism' and 'Brahmanism' are of later origin. It is an invention of foreigners, the Christian missionaries, for grinding their own axe to disfigure the fair face of perennial culture with their religion of sin and suffering and repentance. With the coming of Islam and Christianity, the word Hindu was deliberately manipulated to suit the semantic religious ideology in the imperialistic political game and the jealous God of the barbarian priest that tolerates none. Thus, the word Hindu—an epitome of humanity was divested of its cultural, spiritual and geographical significance, degrading it further to the present perversion. The way of collective dwelling of people in a well-defined geographical location, as an expression of unity in diversity was degraded into the clashing religious sects as it went against the cult of "chosen people," the worshippers of jealous God. If India has to survive as a civilized nation in the world, it has to recover the true meaning and glory of the word to give a new order to the emerging global society. For the word carries a portmanteau meaning beyond the foreign tags attached to it; beyond what people have made of it by irrationally assessing its nature, meaning and purpose on the basis of their cults and creeds, religions and philosophies. The word 'Hindu,' inscribed on the monument of the Darius Hystaspes near Persepolis (486 B.C.) is said of the country with a special culture and spiritual wisdom, and not a particular community or religion but a harmony of communities on the principle

of unity in diversity. Hindu means every mental being above the animal that lives in co-existence with others, and cannot in principle injure the faith of fellow human beings without harming his own. Accordingly, every mental being that has natural antipathy towards all kinds of violence, is pained to see any person or life-form harmed or outraged is Hindu. Whatever his cult or creed may be. Such is the meaning of the word HIN + DU. HIN means 'hinsa,' all acts of violence are painful to the evolving mental being who unlike animal is 'DU' i.e. troubled, pained and mortified to see the self-styled higher animal (man), so "cruel, cunning and carnivorous, sensual and selfish" to use epithets of James Thurber. HIN + DU means every mental being who rejects all that is base, low, ignoble in thought word and deed. Whatever he desires for himself he asks for all. The constant refrain of Hindu is "peace for all, joy for all, love for all, felicitations prosperity for all creatures." At any rate, the writer of 'Ramkosakar' says; that the Hindu cannot be vulgar, ignoble, jealous, and cruel in nature and despise any faith. All gods and goddesses, pirs and fakirs, gurus and saints are his object of respect and worship as they uphold and embody the light of truth, the power of knowledge, and the magic mystery of divine love that unites, harmonises and binds man and Nature in deep relationship as:

All thought, all passions, all delight,

Whatever stirs this mortal frame,

Are but the ministers of Love,

And feed his sacred frame.

Coleridge: Love.

Hindu or Hindustani is Muslim. Hindu is Christian, Hindu is Sikh; yet he is much more than all, as in him the best of everything is mingled, and assimilated in a manifold way of man's approach to the Eternal and the Infinite. In him is exemplified man's forward looking attitude that rejects no new light, no added means or materials, of our self-development. The self-development or self-exceeding becomes possible when man shuns all lowness, narrowness and shallowness in his approach to the Divinity in man and Nature. The largeness and height of his life strives for an integral human entity in which is harmonized the "light and beauty" of Paganism; the "vision of divine love and charity" of Christianity; Buddha's noble way to be gentler, wiser, purer," and how

to be "religiously faithful in action and zealously devoted to God" he learns from Judaism and Islam. This is how in being Hindu, the largest and profoundest spiritual possibilities open for humanity, the way for many-sided fulfilment far exceeding the past, as in the terminology of the Vedas, "the new dawns repeat the old and lean forward in light to join the dawns of the future." The word Hindu is itself a simmering spiritual revolution, a call to every man of sense to awaken to the power that penetrates thought and moves the world. It exhorts humanity to awaken from the slumber, shake off ignorance, and come out of the walls of cults and creeds to inhale the deeper breath of humanity in the play of Nature. Thus liberating us, our hearts unite for a sustained and all-comprehending effort at spiritual evolution as:

"A death bound littleness is not all we are:

Immortal our forgotten Vastnesses,

Await discovery in our summit selves,

Unmeasured breadths and depths of our being are ours."¹⁵

This is to be Hindu and not otherwise. By calling myself Hindu I cannot become Hindu. It is something much more than what people worship here. It is what gives worship the authenticity of experience from which worship is born like a flame of aspiration. The need of the hour, the conditions of our national life and the sinister social circus challenge our strength. They demand from us the courage, patience and power to make it clear that Hindu stands for all that is glorious, spiritual, heroic and enlightening. "Then and then alone you are Hindu," thundered Swami Vivekanada, "When the very name sends through you a galvanic shock of strength." His image of a real Hindu is that of Guru Govind Singh, the strong forerunner, the pioneer to attempt to re-establish India on the rhythm of Dharma, the old Arya-Varta as an evolving Khalistan, the noble land of dharma, truth, knowledge and shakti. In defending and re-establishing the Arya or Sanatan Dharma, the Lion of Bharat, sacrificed his children on the battlefield, shed his own blood and fought against the oppressors. The wounded Lion forgave even those Judas for whose sake he shed his blood. Who is such a Hindu with power, love, light and knowledge to lead suffering humanity? Yet, the great sacrifice of the Guru shall not go in vain, for his failures are not failures whom God leads. In the divine scheme of Nature what the moment sees the ages toil to express and,

"The deepest things are those thought seizes not,
Our spirits live their hidden meaning out."¹⁶

Hindu may believe or may not believe in the existence of God; but he cannot deny the existence of the soul, the truth-power or Satya-Shakti that vibrates in him is like the iron-string of life's harp singing the songs of many meeting lives in a rhythmic beat of Eternity. This is the 'dharma' of his soul and meaning of his existence. People confuse 'dharma' with religion based on a book, revolving round a person or persons born in time, and end in time. Dharma is not a man-made religion but principle behind the evolution of the divine-man in making. It is not to be identified with duty, cult or creed or a system of codes and religious formalism. In the five-letter word there smacks nothing of 'ism' or 'isms' or set of doctrines to practice as much as an attitude of mind; an art of living that makes worship the law of life and all acts to confirm to the Law. It is:

"The worship of a Presence and a Power,
Too perfect to be held by death-bound hearts,
The prescience of a marvelous birth to come."¹⁷

Thus, 'dharma' in contrast to religion is not born in time, as time itself becomes an ordered march of the Cosmos due to this 'principle' that sustains, upholds, directs, binds in a relationship solar systems, galaxies without any clash, friction or severing of the ties. This is the law of gravitation, attraction or Love that coheres the particles of matter together, joins them in mutual bond in which is held the destiny of humanity, in which birds, animals, plants and trees, rivers and mountains are as blood-relations. Such an evolving image of the mother Earth is growing in the heart of the word Hindu aspiring to become that? This is 'dharma,' the Law (with million applications) that holds, governs, helps in the growth and expansion of the physical, ethical, psychological and spiritual working of the universe and its vast-web of relationship. The 'dharma' of Hindu (the path adopted by each individual) is not man-centered and book-based. It is founded on the vision of the Divinity hidden in the soul of man, guiding him to evolve, expand and tap infinite energy coiled in the darkness that envelopes us. 'Dharma,' the rhythm-beat of Energy issues in action that brings cosmos out of the formidable Naught. The action-reaction of Force in terms of order or dharma is the play of creation. It is a life of harmony holding billions of galaxies together in

which everything is interdependent and the existence of the one is linked with the existence of others as rings in an endless chain of relationship. The test of the person treading the path of 'dharmam,' is that he embodies in his character courage, forgiveness, self-control, non-stealing, purity, control of sense organs, stability of mind, quest of knowledge, truth and absence of anger. Anyone adorned with these soul-qualities is treading the path of 'dharma' is an evolving Hindu, a refined-mentality, a Mard-e-Moumin, growing more and more towards the peaks of 'Mard-e-Kamil' to enter into the Divinity, the Darwash-e-Khuda Mast' who lives in and through That who is everything and beyond everything. This realization of 'Ekam Sat' is the widening circumference of individual Consciousness in this Temple or Dargah of universe, in which one can only serve every living form as the worship of God by making all happy and seeing all happy. That is to be drunk in Divinity, the wine of "everlasting bliss of Hafiz," that is enjoyed when

"The blue dome is my cup,
The sparkling light, my wine."

India, the land where the extreme weather conditions meet as harmony of Nature's contraries is the principle in the birth of India as a nation. It fixes a rhythm of thought and action so various, so protean, and different only to ensure an evolution of each form according to its native characteristic elements of growth or 'savabhava' or nature that works in harmony with the whole. This is the reason, "India has for thousands of years," observes Swami Vivekanada, "peace-fully existed. Here activity prevailed when even Greece did not exist, when Rome was not thought of when the very fathers of modern Europeans lived in forests and painted themselves blue. Even earlier, when history has no record, and tradition dares not peep into the gloom of that intense past, even from then until now, ideas after ideas have marched out from her, our every word has been spoken with a blessing behind it and peace before it." It is in this experimental land of the Divine, the seeds of spiritual democracy were sown by its children, as soon as realisation dawned on them that this universe is the "manifestation of the One in the Many, the identity of the Infinite in the disparity of things finite, the presence of the timeless Eternal in eternal Time; it is this seeing that illumines for it the meaning of the universe."¹⁸ The founding principle of India's democracy is based on her native realisation of the Reality as 'Ekam Sat' in the consciousness

of Self within as same everywhere, same in man and woman, bird and beast and plant. The bud of spiritual secularism, bursts open its heart to make its way as identity in separateness, sameness in difference and unity in the play of multiplicity. It treats everything on the principle of equality, and drinks deep of pure humanity, of complete freedom to each individual to attain the level of Truth, the plane of consciousness (forced not by the State or priest craft) determined by his or her evolutionary stage, according to his psychological nature and his/her capacity for deeper experience. Thence comes the importance of variety of religious culture, the different ways of man's seeking for the Eternal like different rivers running crooked or straight eventually return to the eternal source which is their origin and purpose of march.

If we scan the pages of History, we find that in India alone man has not stood up to fight for a tribal God aggressively proclaiming: "My God is true and yours is not true; let us have a good fight." For Hindu means eclectic spiritual consciousness in quest of truth, and search for all-knowledge and world-knowledge, that is all comprehensive and all absorbing. In the consciousness of Divinity within, it absorbs all orations and philosophies; holds the adherents of different faiths in mutual bond of common brotherhood. Hindu means harmony of contraries; a fellowship of faiths, a federation of philosophies—Monists, Dualists, Pluralists, Theists, Atheists, Idealists, Yogis, Anchorites, Moralists—all are soaked in the consciousness of the myriad-mooded Divinity in which one cannot reject or exclude even the adorers of tribal gods and animals. In Hindu there is nothing of the vegetarian or non-vegetarian, an orthodox or unorthodox; it is consciousness expressing variously. It is to be all in one. Sanatanists, Arya Samagists, Brahma Samagists, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, represent a coloured dome of the supreme 'Sabda' of the glowing and widening Hindu-consciousness. Even the Muslims and Christians born in India, whom Mother India has accepted her children, cannot deny their being part and parcel of this myriad-minded Hindustani consciousness-Force. M. Romain Rolland saw this symphony of variable flowers hung on a golden thread. To be Hindustani, is to be multi-dimensional in realisation that holds in its sure embrace the spiritual and material, the esoteric and exotic, rational and ultra-rational in a harmonic order that leads in the making of an integral man. The integral man with integral knowledge is raised for above any expansionist or proselytizing community of fanatics imposing the authority of the person

or the book. He is free from prejudice and prepossessions. He exhorts, invigorates thought, and stimulates the spirit of inquiry, so as to attain the integral vision of this anthropological process of Hindustani consciousness. Like man it is not what it looks on the surface. It is a giant snow mountain rolling on from pre-historic times down to the modern age, expanding and getting bigger and bigger, more elastic and variable by assimilating and absorbing all that is sublime, noble, and beautiful as an heritage of mankind to bring out of it a new man and a new world order and new civilization. The word Hindu goads us for fresh fields and pastures new, to be more than what we are, to know, to serve and become the Divinity hiding in every form of existence and struggling to manifest and transform the sordid earth consciousness. Thus it is:

"Man most must change who is a soul of Time;
His gods too change and live in larger light."¹⁹

To regard others with hatred and to be injurious, malicious, utter hasty opinions, judgments about the word Hindu, associating it with a community, labeling it with this or that tag is always in bad taste to lead men astray. Besides such hasty and jaundiced statements are tinged with hate, and prejudice to dislike what it is unable to get. Moreover, how can we label or define Hindu, when it is in a process of completion—not what it has become or is, but what it is becoming and trying to approximate—beyond the present transition in which humanity is held up. It has not spoken its final word. Hindu at present is Humanity evolving in ignorance, caught in the inconscience of lower nature. It is yet the first three letters HIN of the word, a side aspect of the man potentially Divine, not yet a kinetic divinised man. Where is that Hindu who seeks a "New Light" that is yet "oldest indeed of all lights?"²⁰ It is the Light that kindles our suns, the supreme authority that none can deny as it is "illuminating and reconciling all human truth."²¹ Out of its liquid flame of consciousness is born a text and a Shastra. It is not a book, which moth and white ant can destroy. This is a living knowledge that the "earth cannot bury nor Time mutilate." In his quest, Hindu is an ascetic, sceptic and rationalist—all in one. To be ascetic does not mean to condemn world as an illusion, a snare to run away to a monastery, and seek escape from birth and death cycle. It is seeking asceticism that gives "purity and deliverance from self and from ignorance without stultifying God

and His universe."²² As a sceptic Hindu questions everything, yet his scepticism has the "patience to deny nothing that may possibly be true."²³ As a rationalist he is not one-sided and narrow in his estimate by any new or old dogmatism and furious intolerance. His rationalism does not proceed on the "untenable supposition that all the centuries of man's history except the nineteenth century were centuries of folly and superstition."²⁴ His common sense and enlightenment spurs on to discover truth instead of limiting inquiry by a new dogmatism and obscurantism. It is by grasping the truth with an un-biased, impartial rational mind, having deep and wide look that we can come to an understanding that Hindu is every aspirant in quest of 'rit-cit' or Truth-Consciousness, aspiring for its descent down in our heart, mind and breathing frame to transform the material nature to bring about a happy change when men shall feel close and one, and:

"In the creature the unveiled creatrix works;

Her face is seen through his face, her eyes through his eyes,

Her being is his through a vast identity.

Then is revealed in man the overt Divine.

A static Oneness and dynamic power,

Descend in him, the integral Godhead's seals,

His soul and body take that splendid stamp."²⁵

If I say I am Hindu; it means my Self is in the form of hundred crore people of India in the form of all human beings and forms of Nature. My salvation is incomplete if it is not the salvation of all. In this law of relatedness, one cannot escape without paying one's debt to every form of existence with whom his progress and perfection is closely linked.

As such the poet-seer Sri Aurobindo gives voice to the spirit of India or true Hindu:

"My single freedom does not satisfy,

The heart that has grown one with every heart,

I am the deputy of the aspiring world,

My spirit's freedom I ask for all."

A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme. His nature we can put on when we repay our debt we owe to our Maker, to humanity, teachers, parents, wife and children, brothers and sisters, friends, strangers, animals, vegetative kingdom to the poor and the miserable, to the body-politic—of which one is a member and to the posterity. Without becoming a clean slate for the Divine to write, it is not possible for a person to escape the clutches of mortal poverty and evade the elusive law of 'Karma' i.e. action-reaction tangle. His puja or arti is show-manship, if he is unable to realise God whose centre is everywhere but circumference nowhere. This mutual debt that binds man, Nature and God in a triangle of Knowledge-Love-Action is an outcome of the experience of God-head peeping through every form related to every other form. It is not a talk or discussion, it is simply a self-discipline. The soul disciplined in silence begins to intuit in and through the modifications of his mind after its vagaries sink into musing quietude. In the silence of the mind true, and deep worship and adoration of the nameless Supreme begins as one's 'Ishta' the specific or the chosen ideal-form or path that suits one's nature. Diversity in the path of devotion is a typical Hindustani quality. It does not mean division in society. Husyn Ahmed Madani explained the concept of assimilation in June 1940, when he said that "the inhabitants of Hindustan have Hindustani quality what ever their differences of religion and culture." One may follow any path but what is imperative, is one's sincerity, intense aspiration, deep meditation, pure worship, and self-giving adoration of the Sat Naam, the Sun-word that brings down Grace to work out a magic wonder. It reveals the unknown to us as our marvelous Friend and Lover as:

"A mystery of married Earth and Heaven,
Annexed divinity to mortal scheme."²⁶

In the joy of self-giving adoration the Himalayan peaks of consciousness stretches ego into infinity, its boundaries burst its bonds into the Self's Vastness as soon as:

"A beam of the Eternal smites his heart:
His thought stretches into infinitude.
All in him turns to spirit vastnesses..."²⁷

In true Hindu consciousness the cleft in matter, and spirit is bridged in a perception of body as the living robe of Reality in His play of opposites. The soul in man is a candle of God that burns in the tabernacle of body: "dehyo devalaya namah." Such a perception raises our consciousness above mandir-masjid conflict to find within the temple a living Presence that can alter the colour of our consciousness and change our destiny. It instantaneously gives us the experience of the universe as an ordered working of Body composite of countless bodies and:

"A mechanism no more or work of chance,
But a living movement of the body of God,
A spirit hid in forces and in forms
was the spectator of the mobile scene."²⁸

Man, the living temple is the epitome of the universe and a key to its mystery. This mystery is made palpable by four-fold perfection of man. In terms of true psychology man is four-fold being-Soul, Life, Mind, Body-Complex. At the core of Hindu culture and wisdom, there is no dichotomy in physical, and spiritual seeking of man in terms of 'dharma,' no exclusiveness on either side of the spirit and matter. The material and the spiritual as reverse and obverse of the golden coin of Reality, present no sharp divorce or the irreconcilable opposition. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "cut and dried distinction between idealism and realism or matter and spirit is arbitrary and unreal." In fact matter is the base, the founding rock of Inconscience in the sea of flux. In its dark depths, remains hidden, the spark of deathless Fire that grows as the flame child in the mentalised-breathing frame. It is out of Matter the soul evolves, grows, takes hold of its instruments, comes in front as the leader of the way, and steadily makes this triple existence shed its vestures of mortal poverty. This long and tardy process stretches into millenniums, but can be shortened into a few lives:

"Since little by little earth must open to heaven,
Till her dim soul awakes into the Light."²⁹

Such is the meaning and mission of being Hindu in tune with true spiritual nature, and character of India that is not as some term it to be

a "world shunning asceticism." The opposition of the earth and heaven, the division in matter spirit, the separation of body, and soul is annulled in the alchemic flame of 'chit-tapas, the energizing power of consciousness to which matter, life and mind are not illusion or unreal, but different status or poises of the Eternal in an descending and ascending order of manifestation. It becomes a part of daily-worship to see That or Tat in every status, the same in blade of grass as in the galaxies gliding in the space and also above space a supreme transcendence. So it is that:

Anna or Matter is He, the Eternal,
 Prana or Life Force is Brahman, the Absolute,
 Mano or the Mind is Brahman, the Alone,
 Vijana or Knowledge is Brahman, the Transcendent
 Prajana or Intelligence is Brahman, the Supreme,
 Ananda or Bliss is Brahman, the Unthinkable.

Man the mental being is a higher type of animal; the beast yet dominates him and often man is worse than animal when animal. Man has yet to regulate the animal, like Shiva spiritualise it, and make it a means for greater realization beyond the ranges of mental consciousness and reason. Riding on the animal means that man must not be animal in his thinking and speaking, in his physical nature; not dominated by his material habits and instincts. Man seated on the animal means that a person has raised his consciousness far above the mental and its slavery to ignorance, knowing that –

"This bodily appearance is not all,
 The form deceives; the person is a mask;
 Hid deep in man celestial powers can dwell."³⁰

These latent, "celestial powers" are released by the consciousness-Force of the soul or Atma-sakti hidden in the mantra. "Tat Tvam Asi." On this mantra is founded the spiritual organism of Bharat's way of life, her social set up, and her attitude towards Nature and things. It is the practical philosophy that brings the 'manifestation of divinity in man,' and helps us to evolve the modus operandi of a new order of the emerging global society. The will, knowledge and power released by the consciousness of the Sabda 'tat tam asi' can control man's evolution and

accelerate its process. This is not a mere thought or a scientific abstraction or a wooly-speculation of an armchair philosopher that ends in skepticism or at best lands in an uncertain realm of agnosticism. It is 'darshan sastra,' the dynamic meditation, the stillness of the soul when thought and mind are hushed into silence; there comes an inner listening and sight, the words like trailing clouds of light, murmur in the musical accents the magic mystery of the Everlasting, the awe and wonder of silence that mothers the incessant flux.

This is how intense yearning, love for the Eternal gives birth to philosophy. It is knowledge lived in life through love and realized in action. Only thus the clouds of egoism are dissolved, the limits of abstract reasoning are crossed, and the sun of wisdom shines and the philosophy is born i.e. 'darshan' is obtained. So, philosophy according to Dr. Radhakrishnan is a way of life, a ray of light. To become a philosopher one has to become renewed in life... baptised in spirit. It is a change of man from animal and mechanical creature to the spiritualised divine man of intuition and inspiration by lifting consciousness above the boundaries of thought beyond the Formal or empirical reason into the open spaces of higher reason or the "logic of the Infinite."

This is philosophy or 'darshan sastra' and being philosopher in Indian terms. Every Hindustani is potentially such a philosopher or the lover of wisdom. He has the capacity to make it kinetic, dynamic and operative. It is the 'darshan,' insight into Truth, and encounter with Reality in all our relations with the world. This encounter or 'darshan' is an experience of That power behind thought and word. To That words fail to express, the mind staggers in drawing a picture of It; yet by Its shining everything shines. The modern Hindu poet-seer Swami Rama Tirtha realises It as:

"The same that works thy eyes and hands,

The same doth move what by thee stands.

The one within is all without,

That one does bring what comes about

No foreign force, no foe, no other

Exists by thee whatever."

In the Hindu-philosophy the spirit of love becomes passion that condenses the sea of Beauty in forms that are Shelly's "nurslings of Immortality."

The love that knows no mandir-masjid conflict in its adoration of the universe as the body of God makes every form in it a living temple and a leap into the Infinite. To see God in man is natural to Hindu; but worship That in our parents and Gurus is to see God as the principle of 'dharma,' a rhythmic movement of cosmic beauty resounding with an everlasting note of Reality. It is the realization (if one wants to be Hindu) of the Self-within, revealing variously in Nature and easily to be realised by adoring That in the five temples, the living forms within the cosmic body of the Divine as:

"Matri devo bhava," Worship mother as the Divine,

"Patri devo bhava," Worship father as the Divine,

"Acharya devo bhava," Adore your Guru as the Divine.

"Satyam Vad," Speak the truth, as God is Truth.

"Dharman Char," Follow the path of 'dharma,' the Law of the
the Divine realisation.

This worship of That in the five temples of its cosmic body is imperative in making a person to apprehend "the secret grandiose meaning of our lives." Otherwise, it is a sign of interrogation (?) and Hindu a common human being sunk in the inconscience of Nature, laid asleep forever in inertia and imprisoned in the ideologies of Nations.

A student once put the writer a question: "Sir, what is Hindu and who is Hindu?" With a mingled look of surprise and pleasure the teacher gazed at the face of the student, and pausing a little responded boy's query in the following thoughtful strain: "Hindu is any one who sees his own Self in all and all in the Self. Hindu is Arya or Khalsa or Mard-e-Kamal, pure, selfless, noble, law-abiding 'dharmic' citizen of an emerging global society; fearless, courageous, every way a divine warrior; fighting the battle for Light that begins with the Kurukshetra going on within man. Hindu symbolizes self-conquest that has the power to uphold, knit together the different flowers of the Garden, garlanded in the golden thread as diverse expressions of the vast embrace of unity. The Hindu is a mantra of harmony that links the fair forms of Nature with the life of mankind. To be Hindu is to be most comprehensive and liberal, expressive of spirituality that is universal in its orientation, making us realize that the world is one family and the entire universe is one Self.

"I found in Hindu teachings," writes Frawley, "a science of spirituality that shows us how to understand ourselves and the vast universe in which we live.... such spiritual knowledge and realization is almost non-existent in western religions or in western intellectual culture, which has not yet understood the deeper layers of consciousness of Hindu sages. Compared to Hindu yogic and spiritual giants...the intellectual giants of western culture like Einstein or Freud appear like children in intelligence and understanding. Compared to them, western religious leaders like the Pope who don't have a concept of spiritual realization; appear like beginners in the spiritual realm."³¹ Mother India, personified as Mother Wisdom is working in Nature's breast. She is the Athene of Hindu, the Word born in Infinity's silence to "press perfection on life's stumbling powers." Her; the

Omnipotent

"Made from His being to lead and discipline,
The Immortal spirit of man, till it attain
To order and magnificent mastery
Of all his outward world."³²

The lessons of history ought to be an eye-opener to us. We must awake from the sleep of ignorance to understand that our fall began the day we made 'Brahma Vidya' or spirituality the kitchen religion of touch-me-not-ism. Our clashing egos disunited people, made country weak to be humiliated and devastated by the foreign invaders. The country's atma-shakti got dwindled due to our weakness, fear and ignorance. In Hindu terms weakness is sin, ignorance is sin and fear is the only sin to fear. Burdened by our sins we lost the power or skill, the art of creating and manipulating celestial weapons or 'divya shastra' in front of the enemy that threatened our integrity. The 'devas' or the bright beings do not come to the rescue of sinners as they shun the place polluted by ignorance, weakness and fear that the human ego creates for as it is habituated to learn through suffering, tears, pain and death. In our tragedy and encircling gloom, we wept and prayed, while the hostile forces stormed the country; looted her wealth, trampled its honour, made us too weak to be ruled by handful of foreigners. The dry meditation, the solitary contemplation of thousands of sadhus with begging bowls, passive hermits with other worldly gaze had already made country weak

with their being indifferent to material power, economic prosperity, living in the world as disgusted social exiles. It dried the vital energy of the country with their indifferent, unconcerned and other worldly attitude, resulting in the loss of the bubbling spirit of heroic force of welding the awe-inspiring weapons, flaming arrows, like darting tongues of Kali that conquer, create and new oragnise the collective life of the people in terms of the divine scheme.

Hindu is latent atma-shakti like a lion sleeping in some forest den. This 'sakti' cannot be got by the weak or by the pandit merely well versed in scriptures. For that, we must acquire what Swami Vivekanada says, "Nerves and muscles of iron and will of steel, which nothing can penetrate, not even the thunderbolt of heaven." Hindu is not a fatalist in the sense that he sees an unbridgeable gulf in matter and spirit and Fate and free will as poles apart. For the fatalist, the ideal and the real are two things apart, which like earth and heaven can never unite. As we saw, the word Hindu means the creator of fate. It does not mean rejecting the laws of fate (action-reaction phenomenon) that spun the web of mingled yarn (karma) around man. In Hindu-consciousness, Fate is the outcome of the soul's evolutionary necessity, the choice it has made with a purpose in following the line of growth with architecture of its integral self-fulfilment on the earth plane. This we shall find in the subsequent chapter, for the moment it is suffice to say that the scheme of 'karma' does not force any universal adhesion to a sole infallible dogma; however venerable that may be. Here is no single narrow path or gate of salvation for all. The word Hindu is a spiritual adventure, perpetually enlarging tradition of Godward endeavour, taking us far above the present "death bound littleness" to many-sided, many-staged self-building and self-fulfillment. Karma, the generated 'tapa-shakti' is what we mean by Hindu, the aspirant aspiring for a radical change of consciousness to lay down new karmic-lines of life divine on earth. The materialisation of the truths of 'sastras' is not possible without Shakti, for knowledge without Shakti is an idle speculation that can change nothing. The fall of Hindu precipitated the day they separated from the Light to become too weak to generate 'tapa-shakti' by churning the power and consciousness contained in 'mantra' or the Word, for defending, safeguarding the truth-light, truth-knowledge with divine weapons or the 'shastras,' which their "ancestors welded with spontaneous ease and confidence." Centuries later, Sri Govind Singh and Shiva Ji, the great

pioneers of dynamic action revived the seed of that tap-shakti' in the race stuck in the mud and mire of fear, inconscience, inertia and ignorance. The heroes of the race demonstrated the truth that the rule of 'dharma' can be established, love and knowledge, good and beautiful can become living presences only with the conquering might of the Shakti, the unthinkable Energy that mothers the creation. To them it is awakened Mother India that is Kali-Krishna-Consciousness harmonised and always :-

"Strength shall be with Her like a conquering sword,
And from Her eyes eternal bliss shall gaze."

- Savitri

Moreover, every god and goddess down from the subtle-physical-Vital planes to the mental worlds and the highest trinity Brahma-Vishnu-Rudra carry weapons. Why? God carrying weapon in the hand is an indication that to meet Him one is to be physically, mentally, vitally and spiritually strong. All our devotion, knowledge and aspiration of beauty without the conquering and stabilising force of Shakti are only castles in the air that cannot find the light of the day. God with a weapon exhorts us to shun all weakness and only then approach Him to be blessed. Divine Himself as an Avatar comes armed with a flaming sword to destroy the sons of Darkness; establish the rule of the right or 'dharma,' protect the weak, elevate many and divinise a few. How essential it is for us to put on the armour of courage, hold the sword of knowledge and advance towards victory as the soldiers of Light. Now, if we ask, who is Hindu? What is its evolving image in the future context? The answer would be the following uneven stanzas of the writer's poem.

"One who aspires to be 'Sindu'

Even though a bindu.

Marching endlessly through endless Time,

He deeply drinks draughts of Divinity,

Poured in the Jar of mortal body.

Kindling the fire of tapa-shakti,

With the consciousness and knowledge of mantra Shakti;

Create he can conquering weapons out from universal powers

To deluge the hostiles with flaming arrows.
 He is to discover the coiled serpent-force,
 With hissing music, ready to transfigure,
 And set his conquering foot on time and fate."

"Hindu creed," as Gandhi ji puts it in 'Young India,' April 24, 1924 "is search after Truth" that has "all-embracing inclusiveness" and gives a strong spiritual base to all that is deemed secular and separate. There is nothing sectarian and separatist in it, and it knows like Gandhi that "Knowledge is limitless and so also the application of truth." What we know of the knowledge is a "millionth part of the real Book of Knowledge."³³ Nothing is finished. The word Hindu is a call for the unending adventure of consciousness and joy. Hindu or Manu, the man thinking is a fourfold being aiming at fourfold perfection and fulfilment of mind, life, body and soul. In this adventure he embraces science and Faith, Theism and Christianity, Mohammedanism and Buddhism to drink deep of pure humanity. Even though the nether devil pulls man down, yet he does not yield but like Jesus thunders: "Come behind me Satan, I shall take nothing from thy hands." For man is not ignoble and,

"Still we have souls, nor is the mould quite broken,
 Of that original and faultless plan, which Adam spoilt."³⁴

It is here on this earth, not elsewhere in some remote heaven after death the perfection and happiness are to be attained. Just as the Ganga descending from the transcendent regions, flooding vacancy of the cosmos with glistening galaxies, comes down to the earth to kindle its dark sea of Inconscient with twinkling lights of living souls that grow and become in the endless becoming. Ganga left the celestial Abode to meet her Lord here among the living souls playing in the cool flowery lap of the mother Earth to pay her debt to Him. The Divine is here and everywhere; though mysteriously remote as the indeterminate Absolute, yet so close as our secret Self, who has assumed the mask of human imperfection so that we in our human portion grow divine. There is:

. "A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme,
 His nature we must put on as he put ours."

The Mother assures: As we rise to this degree of perfection, which is our goal, the psychic being the chetta purusha, the real person in us shall manifest as true and pure love; the mind shall become an instrument of infallible knowledge; the vital shall be transformed into an invincible power and strength, and the body too shall partake the substance of the soul to be an expression of perfect beauty and perfect harmony.

This vast organic web of Indianism is the meeting of myriad vibrating cells in a continual progression of movement and change in the ceaseless ebb and flow of time. Every experience, however insignificant is meaningful. An Indian is taught to reject nothing as mean, ugly and dark but have charity and reverence for all things. To be Hindu means to make everything a leap into the Infinite; seeing no fissure in secular and religious as every form and figure in Nature is a symbol to commune with Divinity. The Hindu like Shiva (means Eternal, which is true as well as beautiful) is meant to live in a harmony of contraries. Shiva-consciousness means to impose on our lives a pattern of beauty and goodness as garments of truth to adore ourselves. We can then be able to preserve the sweetness of solitude in the midst of crowd, feel peace at the heart of storm, and see how all problems of existence get resolved in the principle of harmony. The worship of Lord Shiva becomes ideal, and meaningful only when we too like Him live the life of an ideal householder; an ideal yogi, the architect of life and Nature with great love of dance, music, woods, mountains, flowers, and animals.... Like Shiva who is a great respecter of women; we shall uphold the ideal image of womanhood. On our ideal womanhood, on the liberation of women, their proper education and cultivation of their subtle sensibilities depends the happiness and prosperity of our homes and the birth of strong enlightened generation. They are the "Queens" of the garden, and Shiva gives man-woman equal status as two parts of a single body the two-in-one in the dance of creation. A well-planned family of Shiva comprising two enlightened, and strong sons dominates the Eastern and Southern cultural, social and spiritual religious landscape of India, uniting it with the consciousness of the people living in the Northern and Western parts of the country. This is a subtle illustration of harmony of contrasts, an identity in separateness, the sameness in difference, and unity in variety. The 'unity' that is:

"... too close for search and clasp
 And love is a yearning of the One for the One,
 A beauty is a sweet difference of the Same,
 And oneness is the soul of multitude.
 There all truths unite in a single truth,
 And all ideas rejoin Reality."³⁵

To be in Shiva-consciousness is to be man-woman harmonized as two parts of a single body. Being and Becoming, Existence and Force are one and not two who are separable. Becoming without Being is an impossibility, and without Becoming the Being cannot manifest. In the play of Being and Becoming the triangled-relation of Earth, Heaven and Man, the three terms together, give completeness to creation. Shiva, the supreme God as an ideal family-holder is an excellent illustration of freedom in the bonds of creation; living and embodying the life divine in the midst of the contraries and contradictions of Nature and life.

"Musing amid the inconscient silences,
 The Mighty Mother's dumb felicity.'

In the family of Shiva extremes—not only meet but also live in joy and harmony, in a bond of relationship and love. The extreme enemies—serpent, mouse, bull, lion and peacock are such living forms that can never come close without destroying each other. Bathed in Shiva-consciousness, the hissing serpent, the preying peacock, the timid mouse, the docile Bull, the ferocious lion are garlanded in peace and harmony of a single family, epitomizing the order of an emerging global society, "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam." If Hindu is such an ideal householder or dreams of the ideal family, then he is worthy to be called Hindu? Otherwise a sign of interrogation (?) looms large at the horizon. Hindu, an individual soul, the 'jiva' is an inverted Shiva self-oblivious in the darkness of Inconscient. Just as a drop of water (in essence) is same as the sea; so the 'jiva in essence is Shiva, the Eternal. And to know Shiva is to become Shiva:

"The hero soul at play with Death's embrace
 Wrestler in the dread gymnasium of Fate."

The true religion does not consist in the worship of prophets or in mere

lip service of the book but what the prophets worshiped, and what is hidden behind the book. It is the spirit of the letter that saves. True religion is being and becoming what we are not at present but what we are aspiring to be. It is a fresh discovery of the true Self other than the body, senses, life and mind, the force of unity that unites man and universe. The earth in whose lap we are cradled is the Divine's field of action for humanity to grow and become what it is destined to be. Humanity is not enough; it is only a stepping-stone in the purification of the animal and destroying the Falsehood and Ignorance ruling mankind. The "inmost need of man is not to perfect his humanity, but be greater than himself; to be more than man, to be divine, even to be the Divine."³⁶ For spirituality is an experience of the truth beyond mental consciousness and reason. It is "not a lamp on the way to the forest but light and guide to joy and action in the world."³⁷ It is: -

"A spell to bring the Immortal's bliss on earth,
To mate with heaven's truth our mortal thoughts,
To lift earth's hearts nearer the Eternal sun."

Precisely, in terms of higher reason and not according to the tangled-abstraction of formal logic, Hindu is humanity collectively in pursuit of its common destiny, which is the fulfilment and perfection of fourfold man. It is the realization of Truth in its four aspects: Wisdom, Power, Love and Perfection. There is an innate tendency in the higher animal; a kind of dissatisfaction with the present that spurs him on to something more than a perfectly arranged comfortable material order. Gradually, he strives to recover its intellectual freedom; liberate his mind from the thralldom of authority of the "dogmatism of Brahmin and Pandits" and the "new dogmatism of European scientists, thinkers and scholars."³⁸ Humanity must pass beyond; break its chains of the iron laws, "in order to be free in the name of truth, not in the name of Europe."³⁹ If it turned aside from its destiny it would "become stable like the ant of the dung-beetle or after attaining complete efficiency, disappear like the sloth, the mammoth, the pterodactyl or the dinosaur."⁴⁰ But this cannot be, there is something in it that forbids it as: "A death-bound littleness is not all we are." It is not possible for humanity to shut itself long in the watertight compartments of dividing "ism," and go on shedding each other's blood. Hindu, the liberated human being is the infant Krishna

bound to the wain. His breaking of chains sets him free to "move forward dragging with it wain and all and shattering in its progress the twin trees, the twin obstacles to self fulfillment—blind mediaeval prejudice and arrogant modern dogmatism,"⁴¹ for: -

"Always we bear in us a magic key
Concealed in life's hermetic envelope."⁴²

In this perception of the word Hindu, there is the logic of intuition that does not contradict the real as much as perfects it in tune with the destiny of man. It is not something to be dreaded and branded as communal or religious. There is no mention of Hindu or Hinduism in any of the scriptural and semi-scriptural books to describe it a particular religion. Neither the Upanishads; the Gita; the Smritis nor the Puranas ever talk of Hindu religion. Heinrich Von Stien Cron, Professor of comparative Religion at the university of Tübingen writes: "The word Hinduism is not a term which any religion in India applies to itself but is something which Europeans have invented...unfortunately the people who invented this concept did not know enough about the Hindus." They could not help but reflect their minds in superimposing their religious culture of imperialistic ambition on the word Hindu to tarnish its beauty with the pre-conceived opinions, national prejudices and make-believe concocted judgments creating confusion and friction in the minds of masses. In spite of disfiguring the fairy face with different masks, Hindu is the name of the inhabitants of the ancient Hind; human beings with different natures and aptitudes, free in their movement to follow one's Vyakti or personal 'dharma' one's duty 'dharma' to ancestors in co-existence with others and joined collectively to share one's national responsibility and duty to society. To call Hindu a religion in a wider sense is to think of humanity, to think of Religion of humanity, the different ways of approach to Reality that is same in difference, the one in plurality. This 'Hindustani' quality is the most secular, catholic, deeply spiritual, broad in conception, universal in setting and persuasive in its appeal. The court did not in vain made the word "a compendium of virtues" as complained the Marxist intellectual in Hyderabad. The virtue in the word lies in its hidden puissance and consciousness that cannot be found if we narrowed it down to social codes and religious formulas. The virtue of the word lies in its presentation of the dynamic image of the evolving humanity. The capital 'H' in the word refers to humanity, every human being

wrapped in mortal poverty. In the estimation of every man of sense, the word Hindu cannot be squeezed into any religious or communal scheme that opposes all that is secular and forward looking. Its freshness, flexibility and consciousness cannot be destroyed by the sad and insane efforts of the priest and the politician in their manipulation of it to further their narrow, selfish and fleeting egoistic hunger for power and pelf. By rising above religious and communal conditioning of our minds, we enter into the world of pristine simplicity and discern in the word a glowing image of humanity, as it is at present and what it is going to become in the near future.

To be simple is to apprehend simplicity in place metaphysical abstractions, and pre-suppositions that confuse and engender doubt, disbelief and revolt. The simple five-lettered word is suggestive of every human being, every form in Nature composed of five elements having five senses as gods of subtle-physical region for making contact with the world. In the pragmatic sense Hindu refers to man composed of five elements having five senses with basic physical structure, mental make up, moral needs, spiritual aspirations that he shares with mankind that are the same world over. In Hindu, man feels himself identical with whole humanity to apprehend "the cycle of birth, growth, childhood and youth, of sickness, old age, and death, of love and friendship, of sorrow and joy are the same for all men. We share a common origin and common destiny: "Ekaiva mānus jatiḥ. The human race is One."⁴³ The word makes us feel that this oneness is not a phrase or a vision but is going to be a historic fact. In the magic word Hindu, we see mankind's leap into a new millennium of spiritualised society. Five letters in the Word reveal the five stages of evolving consciousness of man. It is from Matter to the living-matter, and the present stage of man as mentalised-living-matter, preparing to rise above the mind to vijñāna and then to Ananda or delight to:

"... Eldorados of splendour and ecstasy

And temples to the godhead none can see."⁴⁴

The dollar-made civilization of mental-man with its magic of science and technology; boasting of its material perfection has made hell of heaven and world an arms bazaar. In the estimation of Sri Aurobindo, "the gospel

of materialism, in spite of the dazzling triumphs of physical science, proves itself always in the end a vain and helpless creed, and that too is why physical science itself with all its achievements, though it may accomplish comfort can never achieve happiness and fullness of being for the human race." The five-lettered word enshrines a glowing image of every life form in a state of motion, and expression, moving towards for regaining its forgotten kinship deep within it:

"And a faint voice of ecstasy and prayer,
Calls to those lucent lost immensities."⁴⁵

We are carried out of ourselves with the suggestive indefiniteness of the cryptic word; its many layers of consciousness from Matter beyond Mind to Knowledge, Light, Freedom and Immortality. It leaves no part of life as a thing foreign and secular, for it finds no cleft in matter and spirit as it aims at "the manifestation of God in Matter." Such is the tonal evocation of the five-lettered word in consonance with the ever-widening circumference of individual consciousness:

H	stands for	Humanity or every Homosapien
I	stands for	Inconscience, Inertia, Ignorance, and Insentience of Nature in which human being is imprisoned.
N	stands for	Nature (both inner and outer) about which man is ignorant. Also stands for National ego, that cabins the free and ample spirit of humanity.
D	stands for	Divinity in humanity; man is potentially divine. This divinity to be made manifest as the principle of Unity brings the realization of universal brotherhood as symbolized by
U	stands for	Unity—the experience of Divinity in man and Nature culminating to the Universal Brotherhood perfecting Equality and Liberty.

The beauty of the word is that a man may disbelieve in God, yet be Hindu; a part of human organism, a mortal creature imprisoned in the darkness

of ignorance, dogged by death and pain. Lost in the whirling world of rush and anxiety, he finds no hope to be saved by the religions of bloodshed and intolerance, or the maniac politicians exploiting masses imprisoned in the walls of national egos. In the dense dark cave of Inconscient man's divinity is pent up and the picture of man as portrayed by Emerson, a "god in ruins" is implied in first three letters 'H, I, N,' that gives picture of the present human beings ruled by the principles of inconscience and ignorance. The man at present is struggling to come out of this ignorance, become conscious of himself and Nature. Thus onward struggle for self-exceeding is suggested by the last two letters 'D' and 'U,' the union of a consonant, and a vowel is suggestive that Divinity is universality which alone is the source of Unity. Divinity as unity expressing in universal brotherhood is the next stage of evolution from a thinking-animal to the divine-man in making. Science and technology, the political concepts and economic ideas have brought the world into a close neighbourhood. If this neighbourhood is to be transformed into a true brotherhood; the bud of human aspiration has to burst open its heart and make its way and "know, posses and be the divine being in animal and egoistic consciousness." No doubt the

".....ascent is slow and long is Time.

Yet shall Truth grow and harmony increase,

The day shall come when men feel close and one."⁴⁶

Strictly speaking, Hindu is not one born in the family of a Brahmin, Sikh, Kshatriya, Vesha, Shudra, Jain and Buddha. Nor are the Vedas, the Upanishads, the six systems of Philosophy, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Gita, the Grant Sahib, etc meant only for a particular race or community. Just as Hindu is humanity at large, so are these scriptures the legacy of mankind, the heritage of human civilization. As such, Hindu is other than the known and more than the unknown, a state of being and becoming that is yet to be materialized. In the poetic terms, it is "what oft was felt; but never so well expressed." Every aspirant who discovers the Vedas in his soul, lives and moves and acts in Brahma or Sat Guru or Krishna-consciousness, manifesting and scattering the sparks of 'Sabda-shakti' in the darkness of this suffering world is Hindu or the real Sikh, the disciple of the Supreme Word called Khalsa or the pure, the noble Arya holding the flaming sword of knowledge to ensure the victory of Truth. India is the motherland of "all those" says Dr.

Radhakrishnan, "who live in the area enclosed by the Himalayas in the north and the seas in the south;" whether they call themselves Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, or Christians are Indians or Bharatiya. The word 'Bharati,' too like Hindu is shrouded in light and mystery. Bharati is every Hindustani or human being who loves and adores 'Bha' or Brahman, the Absolute, the One who is our secret Self. 'Bha' also means knowledge, light and shakti. One who loves Reality, knowledge and Light is 'rati,' and Bharati is the lover of the Divine in man and Nature.

Bharatiya ideal does not hold the myth that only one religion could be true and those who have this religion are "chosen people." Hindu symbolises the life of civilized human beings, striving collectively, despite different thought and expressions, religious creeds and customs for a common goal of peace, prosperity, health, happiness, love, knowledge; the pursuit of truth, beauty and unending perfection. In this life of coexistence the righteousness is practiced for its own sake, and not as the will of a despotic God standing above the world. In practicing this religion of unity in variety there is no ungodly fanaticism, no desire for world dominion that transforms the simple faith of Jesus or the religion of peace (Islam) into fiercely proselytising creed. In Bharatiya vision of life, man the epitome of the universe, is not this body, the name and form that masks him and veils his nature. He is a spark of the Divine, a drop of light, and not Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, the things that half-reveal and half-conceal him. Nor is he an animal who delights in sex, belly-cheer and sleep. Just as man does not live by bread alone so man does not come out of nothing to lapse into nothing. The mentalised living matter (man) is so evolved in the pattern of the soul-spark that it impels him to perfect this triple existence, and reproduce in itself the unity, the harmony, and the oneness in the flow of invisible Force that is all things. The masks of Hindu-Muslim and Sikh-Christian, the heavy and weary weight of centuries inconscience and ignorance of the real nature of man, if continued beyond the limit shall split the human atom, and our human civilization of some ten thousand years old shall end in smoke with terrible destruction of global life for surpassing the explosions of atom and hydrogen bombs. These masks wrap us in self-oblivion of truth that every human being is a spark of the Divine, the golden child, the 'deathless flame,' the conscious soul and the son of Immortality. Is not every child at the time of birth a pure and nameless spark with no name? Can the names we superimpose on it take away its endless and deathless nature?

Do not we force newly born spark-soul to imitate and call itself with this or that name? Do name and dress make one Muslim, Sikh and Christian? Are not all human beings with body, life and mind equally gripped in ignorance, suffering, decay and death? Do not they have common desire to live in health, peace, happiness and prosperity? This is what we mean by Humanity imprisoned in the Inconscience and ignorant of itself and Nature; yet coming out of the crisis to evolve into Divinity, (the divine manhood) and usher the reign of universal brotherhood—the Divinity in multiplicity. This is what we mean by Hindu. In this context, who can deny that he or she is not Hindu? Again Hindu means not only what has been attained and gathered from age to age but also an adventure of consciousness that abhors vacuum or stagnation. "I call myself," says Gandhi ji, "a sanatani Hindu" because, "my Hindu instinct tells me that all religions are more or less true. All proceed from the same God but all are imperfect human instrumentality." ("Young India," October 6, 1921). Hindu-tattva or principle involved in the existence of Hindu does not base itself on an outer authority. Its 'shastras' are ever growing from age to age, ever widening, heightening and integrating. In its movement forward, it is like the Ganga carrying all the impurities of humanity, taking a "provincial form in every province but the inner substance retained everywhere."⁴⁷ Unlike custom or creed this religion of unity in variety remains unaltered. It is so simple. To be simple is to be Hindu yet hardest to attain Hindu-Consciousness, the knowledge of the Self in man as a key to the knowledge of the universe; "As with the self, so with the universe." How important it is for "every one of us" Gandhi voices in 'Young India,' April 8, 1926, "steer clear of conflicting creeds and customs and follow the straight path of truth." Truth like dazzling sun shines alike on saint and sinner; there is nothing high and low for it. So too, in the eyes of true Hindu, a Brahman, an ant, an elephant and dog-eater "are of same status." Because, he has been cultivated in a manner to see this whole universe enveloped by the white radiance of Eternity, supporting the temporal process of world-drama.

After perceiving this universe of movement sustained and directed by the Eternal, we are directed to live in this wheel of time with a sense of transcendence. How can we live in this ceaseless flux with a perspective of the Eternal, and contribute creativity with fervour of friendship towards humanity is an ideal of our nationhood broadly communicated and represented in the language of colours and wheel of Tiranga. This

we shall see in the subsequent chapter. The national Flag like the word Hindu reveals the ascending process of evolution, its purpose and the goal towards which mankind is moving. Here our thought moves with the idea that Hindu—a refined mentality—after seeing universe enveloped in God loses all thought of 'me' and 'mine,' as nothing belongs to him. This perception conduces in making oneself clean man, all selfishness, dirt and dross washed away from the mind. This burning of dirt and dross is suggested by the ochre colour at the top of Tiranga.

The elusive word Hindu presents a pattern of an ideal human being having a perspective of the Eternal in his seeing this world a dwelling place of God. With this experience of the world enveloped in God, he loses all sense of 'me' and 'mine' and cannot covet any man's riches. In Isha vasyam God in everything or everything soaked in Consciousness; there is no question of personal property and personal wealth, as all belongs to Him who is in each and all. If the country is engulfed by scams, embezzlements, bunglings; if the file in the office does not move without silver wheels; it shows that no one is Hindu or Hindustani in the real sense. There is this sign of interrogation? True Hindu, the child of the ancient Hind, acts in dedication, enjoys everything after being offered to God as 'prasada,' the blessing of the Lord. We are asked to enjoy through renunciation of the greed or evil intention of coveting anybody's wealth or possession. Gandhi ji held it as right attitude, the golden key for the solution of all difficulties and doubts that may assail one's heart. "It seems to me," Mahatma says, (Harijan, January 30, 1937) "to satisfy the cravings of the socialist, and the communist of the philosopher and the economist." In this Hindu attitude and vision—God enveloping this universe is contained the whole philosophy and religion. In this eternal truth (the universe and everything in it is the body of God) there is no duality of the East and the West, black and white, clean and unclean. It admits of no reduction, no palliation, nothing high and low but all equally the creatures of the Isha or Creator. This is to be enlightened Hindu with a single eye or third eye that visions "the Brahmana and the bhangi, the learned man and the scavenger, the Ezhava and pariah, no matter what caste they belong are pervaded by Lord God."⁴⁸ Realizing God the undisputed, and unchallengeable Master of everything we possess, the ignorance vanishes, inconstancy disappears, and there is no ego to utter such words as: "my house, my enemies that I have killed, my bank-balance is swelling, I must make it white..." The Truth is: "The universe

is enveloped by God; everything in it is to be enjoyed through renunciation i.e. using the necessities of life in their dedication, without any malicious eye or undeserving desire of anybody's riches." Renunciation is not abandoning the world and retiring to the forest. It is work done in sacrificial spirit. It is renunciation in action through love, and feeling of oneness of man, Nature and God. In this love's ecstasy one exclaims: like Gandhi; "I want to take the world in the embrace of my love."⁴⁹ That is like a true Hindu, and befitting the father of Nation who knows God has many names because He is nameless so can afford for us many names and forms because being nameless and formless. He is above speech and thought and so speaks to us through many tongues. In this truth is summed up universal brotherhood; the doctrine of equality of all creatures on earth free from slavery and authority however sacred that may be." This I say, "Mahatma Gandhi avows, "is my faith and should be the faith of all who call themselves Hindus;" the children of the glorious Hind irrespective of the fact they call themselves Brahmins, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Thakur, Dalit, and what not. "And I venture" says Gandhi, "to suggest to my Christian and Mussulman friends that they will find noting more in their scriptures if they will search in them."⁵⁰ For the true Hindustani, whatever is inconsistent with this truth—the truth that fulfils the godheads of Democracy-Equality-Brotherhood-Freedom must be rejected as un-Hindu and foreign to Indian culture and ethos.

Dr. Radhakrishnan remarked, "We deride what we do not understand, we reject what we do not recognize."⁵¹ To recognize a glowing image of humanity in the word Hindu demands judicious magnanimity, understanding and sympathy on our part to enter into the consciousness of different individuals and find that we are all equally the heirs of joy, love and woe and rise and fall together. Then it is easy to perceive in a Brahmin, Muslim, Sikh, Rajput, Mahajan, Christian, Shudra, Jain, Buddhist; a composite image of evolving global family. Our present differences and hate caused by inconscience and ignorance that rule the world is a great obstacle in our becoming what we ought to be. We are H, I, N, i.e. human beings governed and ruled by Inconscience and Ignorance that have shackled country's politics in chains of lust, greed and ambition. Bereft of the deeper knowledge of their forefathers, the children of Mother India are amorous of the glittering gold of European

civilization. To them, Indian thought is a mystic parable like Shelly's ineffectual angel beating its luminous wings in vain. This is how the dark forces of inconscience and ignorance rule Hindustani; the causes of hate, violence of religious fanaticism that does not make us organise and act together. Shall our lives lay wasted in violent conflicts of mutually repellent autonomies? Alas!

It is the tears; the blood

Prodigally spent that builds a nation's greatness."⁵²

"When the sense of human community is absent," Dr. Radhakrishnan observes, "society becomes a riotous mob." The world seething with explosive forces is due to the division, and fissure in human consciousness. Hindu is a bridge that bridges the cleft. It calls us to read ourselves in others as your own self; feel yourself to be human, feel the touch of tears and realize that

"...man is always man

Although an enemy."⁵³

Why imperil our collective life with the memories of hate? The call of Time demands we change our consciousness, fashion a new type of human being relevant to the new world in which we happen to live. "The world must become our home," says Dr. Radhakrishnan, "if we are to save the human race." After all:

"We are the future's greatness, therefore owe

Some duty to the grandeurs of the past."⁵⁴

Thus to be Hindu is to refashion the individual; remake him in the image of perfection already in him. It is to look within us to transform ourselves, to cleanse ourselves of evil tendencies, the fallen side of human nature and raise ourselves to a higher plane. Hindu spirituality commends itself to man's understanding, to the spirit of reason that has no place to incredible dogmas and doubtful events. Besides it has a universality of outlook needed to achieve world unity. In this spirituality, the existence is not an aimless fall but an ordered march from life to animal consciousness and from animal consciousness to human intelligence. It

has to grow from the level of human intelligence to that of spirituality in his psychical nature. Therefore, at the human level man has to put forth effort to achieve his goal. He cannot be a mere spectator; he is a participant in the process of cosmic evolution. The Divinity waits to be disclosed:

"All in not finished in the Unseen's decree!
A mind beyond our mind demands our ken,
A life of unimagined harmony
Awaits concealed, the grasp of unborn men."⁵⁵

All this what we have talked about the word 'Hindu,' has not been superimposed but what is a spontaneous welling of wisdom strains out of the Word—ofcourse recollected in tranquility-describing the upward evolution of the "earth-hampered creature's destiny" to Mard-e-Kamil and Darwash-e-Khuda Mast.' Accordingly, in this context of an ascending scale of man's growth, there ought to be something special, unique and inspiring in the life, conduct, speech and action of the Hindustani Muslim or the Hindustani-Christian; the Hindustani quality, which is hardly to be discerned anywhere in the thought, and action of the Christians and the Muslims of other countries. Hindustani Muslim apprehends the truth of Allah revealed in many-coloured dome of different religious communities like the flowers of different hues growing and expanding in perfect symmetry, order, balance, and proportion in the garden of India. Beauty that reveals truth, is not due to a single flower but is a combination of different hues and names, their order in life of co-existence in which every flower enjoys the air it breathes. Non-violent Indian Christian willingly takes the crucifixion of human suffering on his shoulders, and cannot help to love his neighbour as his true Self. The truth involved in the word Hindu, the line of individual and social life chalked out by the truth is incompatible with the theocratic set of uniform society upholding the policy of either this or that. Truth recognises different natures of human beings helping each to develop according to its latent tendencies and talents. Uniformity is a great obstruction in Nature's way of working. Sri Aurobindo has emphasized this truth a great deal. He says, "The state tends always to uniformity, because uniformity is easy to it and natural variation is impossible to its essentially mechanical

nature but uniformity is death not life." The dogma of 'this or that' has witnessed the war of crusades, the bloodshed of innocents and burning and killing of many saintly persons. "It is not for the sake of 'this' or 'that,' Nolini Kanta remarks, "that one loves 'this' or 'that' but for the sake of Self that one loves this or that." In true Hindu attitude the two are one, the duality (caused by ignorance) simply represent different angles of perception of the Reality. Our perception of Reality is like five blind men in the story describing the elephant in terms of the individuals sense perception and mental presumption of the parts for the whole; not knowing that: -

"Knowledge is the swallow of the lake,
That sees and stirs the surface shadow there,
But never hath dipt the abysm,
The abysm of all abysms..."

The Limitless cannot be put into the limits; the presence that is everywhere cannot be labeled as 'this' or 'that.' The spiritual feeling of Hindu glimpses in the person of Christ a prototype of an Indian yogi. The Kalma echoing from the domes of Mosques come charged with ethereal fragrance musing of peace and supremacy of the omniscient Ecstasy. While in the temple, he drops in silence in which the outer temple becomes a doorway to enter into the temple of his heart. To be born in the outer temple is good but to die in it is sin. The walls of the outer temple are over-leaped as soon as one begins to breathe, and soar in the sun-lit spaces of the soul. The present transitional stage of evolution in which humanity lay bewildered and stupefied may perhaps have a painful parting. "We are living in days of destiny," warns Dr. Radhakrishnan, "Either the world will blow up in flames or settle down in peace." This is the dark night of the soul; life has become dim, its forms are stiffening, and the modern community has lost relatedness of things, the

"...brothers and sisters all around,
In the air and on the ground,
And they are the same as I."

There is a void today in the men's minds which dogmatic religions are unable to fill. In his lack of capacity to believe man is spiritually displaced and traditionless. The conflict in 'this or that' is dragging humanity towards terror, religious frenzy and war. Already, the scientists and the technicians who pose to be as leaders of our age have rendered man a creature of automatic reflexes. He has been thrown off in a cosmic whirl as a speck like countless fleeting objects. Knowledge of science, technology and matter devoid of spirit's transmuting touch have reduced man purely mechanical, material being blind to the higher sanctity which lives in him. Inventions of science i.e. knowledge without wisdom to "press perfection on life's stumbling powers," has brought this world in a grip of crisis standing on a vast heap of explosives. Their scientific achievements threaten to destroy us. The world divided in consciousness is torn with discords, divisions and dualities. There is a great question mark on our future!

 "...the riddle of man's birth,
And life's brief struggle in dumb Matter's night.
Whether to bear with Ignorance and Death,
Or hew the ways of Immortality.
To win or lose the godlike game for man
Was her soul's issue with Destiny's dice."⁵⁶

Is there a kind of inevitability that inexorable laws prevail to make man a helpless, tennis ball in the hands of forces, which he neither understands nor has power to control? Can he do nothing, but endure whatever happens as his mind is conditioned to believe:

 "This world's the puppet of a silent Will,
Which moves unguessed behind our acts and thoughts."⁵⁷

Why I am suffering is the question within me and its answer too lies wrapped in the interrogation itself. Is not the crisis in which humanity is caught due to our collective thinking, acting and our attitude towards each other and Nature? Can cause of the phenomena be found outside the phenomena? No. To condemn, criticise, complain and blame God, Nature, circumstances and people for my suffering, and deplorable

condition is not only un-Hindu but falls in the category of *reductio-ad-absurdum* in technical terms. All this environmental pollution, ecological imbalance; Nature made red in tooth and claw, the diseased society, corrupt administration, criminal politics of money-bank election etc, reflect our character and the destiny we are preparing for ourselves. Does not it give us every reason to lament what "man has made of man?" In Hindu scheme man is not merely a creature of time. He is not dependent solely on his material conditions and possessions and confined to them. He lives in a moral world in which freedom and fate are two expressions of the Force that thinks, acts and becomes and so,

"We build our future thought by thought,
For good or bad and know it not."

Thought that becomes act to produce an opposite reaction is another name for fate that makes man's life scene of his moral choice. Consequently the present crisis, the tragic clouds that hang on us, the encircling fear and uncertainty look like the prelude of some impending catastrophe is the outcome of our collective thought and action. The resultant movement of individual and general karma hangs on us like Fate in the Greek tragedy. And we know the tragedies do not occur like lightening from heaven but issue out of the character. Character is destiny. Our misdeeds blast us. 'Dharma' rejected means life dejected and destruction of the element that rejects and causes discard. The world of moral law invests the individual with freedom to create the rhythm of its own action-reaction to be the creator of his own destiny. The Divinity immanent and transcendent is untouched by the human standards of sin and virtue as heaven and hell is within man who is his own friend and enemy. "I am my own tragedy and comedy," as Emerson puts it. So it is, as A.G. Cronin writes, "On the wheel of thought, we may edge the weapons of tragic self-immolation but we may also shape the tools to build for ourselves an abode of joy and peace." Thus we are free to be or not to be. Our every action carries in it a calculated force, either to make us the soldiers of Light or drag us into the Devil's party or sometimes like Trishanku of the legend hang in between, losing both Earth and Heaven. Should we not resolve then to forget our individual, communal and national differences and interests, think less of our conflicting selfish claims and more of Nation and humanity? For, "Thought is another name for fate."

There is a "magic of thinking big." Therefore, the poet Seer Professor Rama Tirtha exhorts:

"Choose then thy destiny and wait"
 Let the God in thee rise and say,
 To adverse circumstance "obey"
 And thy dear wish shall have its way."

Here is neither Fate nor freewill but the working of the cosmic order, in which Fate and free will are the two arcs of a vast circle and not as contradictions opposed to each other. This shall be our subject matter in the next chapter to state that fate and freewill are not two extremes that never meet. In the life's moral choice they swing in an ascending and descending scale towards the heights and dashing down with a mighty power of action to complete the

"...mystery of married Earth and Heaven
 Annexed divinity to the mortal scheme."

Thus following the line of the higher reason with every precaution that the stream of thought is not lost in the tangled abstractions of the Formal logic to construct a hypothesis out of a priori presumptions the writer has stepped aside to have a fresh look of the word, intuit the five-lettered word HINDU. LO! To his surprise he found in it the principle of harmony for resolving all problems of existence. Harmony in the human solar system is a representation of life lived in togetherness, in which living of the moon in freedom as an individual entity means living for all in a bond of love called attraction or gravitation. The letter: -

H stands for Harmony

I stand for Involved/Immanent/In

N stands for Nature

The discovery of this Immanence is not a task light and easy. We have to rise above our names, cults and creeds. We have first to cure our jaundiced eyes and change our consciousness. As without a change from communal-minded religious fanaticism, imprisoned in the egoistic prisons

of Brahmanism, Islam, Christianity, Dalitism, etc, to harmony and peace is a thirst to something afar. It is an attempt to decondition, dehypnotise our minds from all cults and 'isms' and drink of pure humanity; the vision of man lifted above the level of natural and social world to his spiritual being. This art of finding man as a spiritual being (not a beast that delights in the flesh and blood) is the art of right thinking. It is not only the right medicine to cure our jaundiced eyes but has the power to "free our gaze to reach wisdom's sun," that dissolves, disperses the clouds of doubts and darkness blocking the manifestation of man's potential divinity. To be potentially divine means divine man in the making. What one is that he has to become, as what is inward becomes outward. This divine man or real Man is far above the qualities by which man is defined and the external relations by which he is bound. In this discovery lies the unity of man and Nature ushering into the universal brotherhood as implied in the suggestiveness of the last two alphabets of the word:

D stands for Divine and Divinity, the truth/principle of

U stands for unity/universal Brotherhood

Look! How much abused is the word that actually is the discovery of man as essentially subject, not object. In knowing the soul in man as the master of matter, life and mind, we can give spiritual orientation to science, technology, economics and politics as instruments of consciousness. Divinity, the truth light in man raises his status for above animals. Unlike them he cannot be determined by his biological past and reduced to "insignificant speck in a depersonalized universe." In his self-realisation lies wisdom and power to control his future by his plans for the universe. The Divinity in the heart of each atom is also the Transcendent, the eternal presence all-pervading, unchanging that (not grasped by thought) but only:

"If we could take our spirit's stand within,
If we could hear the muffled daemon voice."⁵⁸

Every atom dances in the joy of this deathless and living presence that harbours infinity. In Hindu or Hindustani democracy of spiritual secularism God within us also is living and growing in the form of

countless souls. He has assumed human imperfection; taken up the cross of each mortal creatures' suffering. Why? Because, he is not a despotic ruler executing His iron laws by sitting above in the Heaven; nor a jealous god indifferent to human suffering. As a divine democrat, He is infinite love and infinite compassion. In the working of the karmic law, the soul has countless possibilities to unfold; therefore in the working of the cosmic order, the soul is provided with a succession of spiritual opportunities. For it is not possible to exhaust all karmic-energy in a single life. It is after endless birth in endless time, "the secret grandiose meaning of our lives" is revealed. In this divinely democratic order all are equal and free to take their own time to perfect themselves. It is an adventure of self-discovery that stretches into ages and millenniums. Man is given freedom of time, place and path to perfect itself according to its line of thought and the stage of evolution it has reached. Not only one life and one chance is given to human beings as the soul does not assume birth in human form only once and it has not finished by merely developing into humanity. God, the Divinity within and everywhere is not hard-hearted, narrow-minded, cruel taskmaster, irrational inhuman and undemocratic, executing barbarously His iron laws, and at the end of this one life, human beings to be redeemed if good or condemned if evil. God is all love, peace and omniscient Ecstasy:

"...whose patient love,
Embraces even our faults and sins."⁵⁹

So sweeping the strings of mind, the writer heaves his heart to mouth; giving vent to the treasure house of wisdom contained in the cryptic word Hindu. This he did as a Hindu a "man speaking to men," by listening in the depths he found what is deep is always musical, carrying in itself a resonance of perfection already in man. No doubt, what he has typified in the word 'Hindu' is an art of living in the consciousness of Divinity manifesting towards some marvelous birth to come. In the growing image of Hindu and what it contains, Nature has not yet effected in the mass or even in the individual. In it is the struggle of inward straining energies working to "prepare something in the world which will help to bring humanity nearer to the goal of its difficult ascending journey."⁶⁰ This endless becoming in endless time has to culminate in the arrival of the deputy of the aspiring world, the Hindu Hero of Nostradamus.

"A flaming warrior from the eternal peaks,
Empowered to force the door denied and closed....
And burst the bonds of consciousness and Time.⁶¹

Hindu, every soul is a "traveler of eternity" who has accepted willing crucifixion for this marvelous birth to come. The child of Mother India is made to dare death, suffer life and live dangerously. In this splendid hazard of life, the Divinity has armed the flame-child with power divine to be a "wrestler with the dangerous earth." Fearing nothing, caring nothing as it is

"The immortality that thinks in me,
That plans and reasons"⁶²

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Chapter - II

IS KARMA A RIGID AND STERILISING FATALISM?

In the previous chapter we saw the word 'Hindu' concerns to all men's business and bosom, being irrevocably linked with the process of evolution of humanity in general and a human being in particular. In being Hindu, an image of homosapien is carved as a human being evolving in the world of Ignorance; imprisoned within the walls of Nations; straining and struggling to come out of the material Inconscience and Ignorance to fulfil his destiny of divinizing himself. The five-fold lettered word lays down the five-fold mode of educational sadhana for the man to perfect himself. Humanity has yet to take two more steps (as indicated by D and U) to make kinetic the potential Divinity, and the subsequent emergence of global sense in man to usher a new world order of universal brotherhood. That is exactly what is ingrained in the sense and thought of five-lettered word Hindu.

What man is or what man has made of man is a surge of forces released by man himself, his desire to force its will to act in a way to entrap or liberate himself. What he shall be again depends on the direction of the forces that condition his going. Human beings that make for Humanity are not species apart; shut in the watertight compartments of communal creeds, and religious beliefs with no general and operative laws that bind them to a common destiny. The laws of being at bottom are same for all as all existence is one existence, one spirit, one mind, one life and energy at work. Energy outside and energy in man creates and gives airy nothing a local habitation and name. The whole formula of the material universe is a long persistent movement of Energy, its action and the result of the action. Conscious-Force in man and everywhere takes on forms or produces forms to enter into many kind of activity and engender a multitude of active relations. In the play of Energy is concealed the mighty

Action which is the universe that ebb and flows in all kinds of individual variations as parts within the whole bound together to manifest the working of All, in a manner that none can isolate without causing friction in the system. The action of Energy in the universe, her play in each formation is a process of cause, and effect stretching back into millenniums gathering fresh momentum in the present for an unending progression and march towards the future. What has been achieved is a stepping stone to that which is to be achieved as all the past has laid the foundation for the present to raise upon it the "golden tower" for the "flame-child" to dream, to will, to re-shape in terms of the Divinity within, and live and love in the joy of universal brotherhood.

Man in appearance is a tip of an iceberg. Below this tip is a sea of Inconscience of which man is unaware. This sea is an accumulated energy-seed of man's evolution beyond the present, a play of energies accumulated from the past millions of years that are dark to him as dark as is his future growing out of the play of present thought-energies. Man like a stream is linked on one side with the perennial Himalayan glaciers, the sleeping past goading him in the present to continue its march till it is liberated from all determination. Such is the law and process of Karma. The influences, velleities and impressions of the past persist and continue as an influence in the future to come. So sings the Poet-Seer in his epic "Savitri":

"Our past lives still in our unconscious selves,
And by the weight of its hidden influences,
Is shaped our future's self-discovery."

Such is the law and process of Karma. The determination of man's generated force of the thought and act create a knot of Karma for the soul to untie with a new birth, to make rebirth a significant process for working out latent karma out of its consequence. Rebirth is the determining power of one's past Karma, the movement of consciousness that knits the mingled web of its life. In our common estimation of things we are accustomed to talk of Fate and free-will in antithetical terms as two irreconcilable forces like two banks of a river that can never meet; therefore, one is either a fatalist or a believer in free-will. Man, ignorant of his real self, absorbed in its superficial movement is oblivious of the vast sea of consciousness below and above his surface. Thus enveloped

in ignorance he cannot comprehend how Fate and free will are reconciled in him as twin truths simultaneously working in our life. This defect in thought not only squeezes courage in us; it also blurs the vision. And void of clearness in the temperament we construe in the "hidden presence, the brooding wings of Fate overshadowing the world."¹ This error in judgment is called 'hamartia,' in the Greek terms that entraps a person in a giant mechanism fatal to the judicial exercise of thought and rational freedom of intelligence. This defect in thought reduces man to a "discouraged acquiescence,"² to believe that Kismet is the knot of existence and a determining factor in the march of things. The situation further worsens when we try to assess this determinism in terms of human likes and dislikes, sin and virtue, sorrow and happiness to create unbridgeable gulf in consciousness. It is this cleft that brews all kinds of doubts, fears and insecurity to land us, the poor creatures in the "envious hands of Fate" like flies in the hands of wanton boys who kill them for their sport. Is not this rigid and sterilising Fatalism the offshoot of man's "hubris" trying to measure limitless within the limits of egocentric consciousness, measuring the measureless with the measurable standards of sense mind? Every error like all evil is "born of division in the indivisible." It is a distortion of truth concealed in the evil itself. This error is associated with the habit of thought that works in opposition. It cuts the whole into fragments to appease its subconscious urges and passions. The mind's opposition to break up His myriad-minded oneness causes him to be cabined and shut in the dangerous contours of mental thought crying in vain for the light of freedom in his saddest songs, which he calls the sweetest. Mind's presumption, its insistence on its thought that this or that must be the truth, conditions his movement of life, belief and attitude towards things. But whatever may be man's belief about Fate and freewill, it makes no difference to his actions. To quote Sri Aurobindo, "it is not our intellectual ideas that govern our action but our nature, temperament and emotive mind."³ Instead of making belief or idea of Fate an excuse, to clothe one's indolence and quiescence; one can cut the Guardian knot, set free the stream of thought by visualizing the secret Will working mysteriously through the blindness of human will, shaping mortal creature's destiny in a manner that one is one's tragedy and comedy. Fate and free-will, the two sides of Energy are like positive and negative currents of electricity that make for the truth of Nature's contraries and

"The truth once uttered, from the earth's air effaced,
By mind forgotten, sounds immortally.
For ever in the memory of Time."

— *Savitri* 6, C1

The doctrine of Karma like an extension of the Newtonian principle of causality to the domain of ethics is akin to his third law of motion applied to the emotional-mental life of man. The theory of Karma is therefore antithesis to fatalism because man not only suffers the consequences of his past Karma but also generates future Karma. Put in the Upanishadic language, it comes to what Brhadâranyaka Upanishad says, "As you do and believe so you become." In scientific language it is: "Action and reaction are equal." With the great man of action, the idea of Fate is the hidden Will in him, the motive force of his living and constant sense of the energised action that has cast him down. It is his karmic movement that becomes Fate deciding the course of the divine waters of Ganga following the footsteps of Bagirath. As such forces of life in their overall action don't tend towards a gospel of fatalism, as much as to subserve man's gradual growth out of the ordinary consciousness towards a "greater presence" that works in Nature's bosom for:

"Fulfilling the occult magnificent plan,
The world-wide and immortal spirit in man."

— *Sri Aurobindo: The Hidden Plan.*

The belief in the law of Karma, the idea of Fate and free will has teased mankind out of thought since the dawn of human civilization. In one form or another—in the East as well as in the West—it appears down to our modern times. The Greeks were haunted by the thought of the mysterious workings of Necessity ruling the gods and men alike. The Mohammedan "sits calm and inert under the yoke of kismet."⁴ So too, the "mild Hindu," finds excuses from "perseverance and masculine effort," by binding himself rigidly to the Fate that has written calamity or failure on his forehead. Such imprecise notions about the law of Karma, Fate and free-will justify humanity's initial groping within the limitations imposed by its ignorance of Nature's workings, and inconscience of the Self hidden in things. These initial gropings of half-light and half-truth are not unlike formless and arbitrary predestination of modern science shadowing

vague and twilight picture of the truth of Determination. In these notions, we don't find the ulterior significance of the law of Karma or Fate and free will cumulatively explored up to the consummation. The popular interpretation is a twilight picture of the Karmic law that over simplifies the complex truth by distorting the true meaning of the Karmic process with several misconceptions. It reduces the deep and complex process to a very simple moral law. The idea with them is that one's past actions determine the conditions and happenings of the next birth. Accordingly, the virtuous enjoy successful, prosperous and happy life in the next birth; whereas those having committed vile acts shall be full of misery in the next birth. Many also believe in the double reward and punishment theory. In their view, the virtuous after death enjoy the pleasures of Heaven and after their heavenly stay are born on earth as prosperous and happy. So, the sinners first have to burn in the hot cauldrons of hell after having paid for the sins are born as miserable creatures in the next birth. Again, when it is asked why a man of very high morals is not rewarded with worldly prosperity? The ready-made answer is that he suffers because of his past sins or if inspite of doing nothing he is prosperous, the people arbitrarily reply that in his past he was active and hardworking man, and at present he is cashing in on his past balance of sincere labour.

The idea behind this theory is that Action; the Karma of this life is exhausted by the life in the world beyond in which the results are fulfilled. After reaping the harvest of its action, the soul returns to earth for fresh Karma. Conscious being made of desire is impelled by his will to act, achieve results and after death go to whatever the worlds his mind cleaves. Coming to the end of his Karma he returns to this world for further exploration and growth. Karma, the cause of birth and the soul's passage to other world existence and the cause of its return here is a self-imposed activity; a choice of the Subject and not a mechanism laid upon man by some invisible inconscient mechanical force. It is there for some reason and by choice. All throughout it, is the soul's own consciousness, will and desire that sets the wheel of Karmic law in motion. All energies—thought, speech, act—put into activity go to constitute one's Karma that helps to develop the nature in one direction or another. Man's nature and its actions not only create reactions to produce consequence for him to reap but also acting on others create movements in the general sum of forces for others to suffer sooner or later. For every action, there is an

equal and opposite reaction. Even the unspoken thought, the unexpressed will are active energies, producing own vibrations or effects that call for execution. These:

"Are dumb graph of truths that work unseen."

The Karmic law means that all existence is the working of a universal energy. It is a process, an action of not only building of things by that action but also unbuilding as a necessary step to further building. This process of building or unbuilding is a continuous chain of birth and rebirth in which, "one link is bound indissolubly to the past infinity of numberless links and the whole governed by fixed relations and by fixed association of cause and effect."⁵ The rhythm of cause and effect makes past fructify in the present, and future the outcome of the churning of the present. All cause and all effect is the working of energy that puts forth cause to return as effect according to its nature. The basic idea behind the Law of Karma is the action-reaction theory, the universal Law, that "In every action there is an equal and opposite reaction," or in more general way; "as you sow so shall you reap," investing every act some kind of moral significance. Now, this reaping is not in terms of moral actions only but is equally related to and linked with mental as much as to our outward relations with the physical universe. In addition to moral actions, there are various types of mental, vital and physical actions as are omitted in the popular notion of the Law of Karma. The moral energy of our action determines the nature and effect of the moral consequence not as independent entity but subject to the output of various other energies influencing it. The highly ethical pursuits of an ethical man are rewarded by a natural happiness, a sunny felicity and purity and poise in him. But this "but" is of cardinal importance as it dispenses the total reward of the doer subject to some incidence of past, present and future surrounding circumstances. If the virtuous is tamsic, cowardly person how is he to be rewarded with worldly prosperity; for in sowing the seeds of tamsic feebleness one reaps the reward accordingly.

Accordingly, the mental energy we put forth is also Karma determining the mental effect. This is true for the output of physical energy. The cumulative effect of all these energies is subject to the impact of the past, present and future surroundings and circumstances. In this scheme of working, there are no isolated powers in the world. The different energies

are subordinate strains, variously formulated motions of the one universal Force. It is the measure and quality of man's inner being that translates the output of physical energy into mental and moral energies. The disposition of the constituent electrons of man's brain, and nervous system are churned out of the physical energy as the product of 'anna,' food or matter. At the bottom, the physical, the vital, the mental, the moral, the aesthetic are the forms of one universal Force. The Law of Karma is based on the inassailable ground that all energies in Nature have their natural consequence. The return of the action can be delayed not withheld forever. For example, a self-assertive vital-egoism, trying to trample all that oppose its dark desires, raises mass of reactions of hatred, antagonism against itself. It also raises still more formidable reactions in the universal nature, which may have their results now or thereafter. The very forces that the ego of a strong man seizes to utilize for its selfish ends rebel and turn against him. The people he had tried to crush and trample on rise up and receive power for his downfall. This principle is true for the mental being in us trying to find success by misuse of Nature's force. The force has to react according to the energy put forth. The man receives the adverse return in the guise of a defeat and suffering and failure. Do not: -

"Man's own deeds that return back,

On his doomed head with a stark justice, a fixed vengeance?"

—Sri Aurobindo: *The Lost Boat*.

The individual does not only reap the harvest of his works and deeds; its results have also impact on others even after his departure from the world. A wave here causes disturbance elsewhere is the formula (law) of solidarity and continuity of life in Nature. According to this law a part is related to the whole and individual cannot altogether, even if he so wills, live for himself alone. Even during man's lifetime, others reap the fruits of his energies. The resultant action of the energy of the being is not of one sole kind. The summary popular notions are less general and authentic. They offer no foothold to the philosophic reason as being true only in part. They are overstated and bring in a doubtful note. By creating a wrong perspective, these notions give no answer to the search for the true significance of life. Besides the popular notion of the Law writes Sri Aurobindo in his, 'The Life Divine,' "errs by an over simplification and an arbitrary selection of a limited principle."⁶ People generally are

motivated in terms of good and evil, likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain, and are likely to assess the workings of the complex process in terms of their conditioned mind. The law of Karma with its complex ramifications is spread in three dimensions. It cannot be hammered into the single duality of ethical good and evil. To judge it merely accordingly to the ethical-hedonistic terms of a limited principle, is to set aside the variety of many-sided action of the Soul in life, and its resultant manifestation of many kinds of latent energies through that action. For the soul is:-

"A Voyager upon uncharted routes
Fronting the viewless danger of the unknown,
Adventuring across enormous realms..."

—Savitri, B1, C5.

Karma or Action is the play or working of conscious energy in Time, "a form of Tapas," a driving desire, passion, impulse and knowledge. Its multifarious movement is complex, tangled and twisted in many knots. It is an exceedingly manifold landscape of the individual, and the universe related to the Transcendent. The evolution of the soul itself is a complex process continuing from the past, working out the resultant deeds of the past in the present and moving towards the future unfoldment. This process is a tangled-web of inner activities of mind, activities of life, a pursuit of beauty, a pursuit of ethical good or evil, joy, happiness, fortune, success, pleasure, life satisfactions of all kinds, life-enlargement, a pursuit of health, strength, capacity, satisfaction of the body. All these are Karmic in nature, the forces in operation that surge and strain and struggle for fulfilment and perfection.

Exceedingly tangled web of Karmic law cannot be over-simplified as to be judged by simple moral codes. To quote Sri Aurobindo, "ethics, the maintenance of human standards of morality cannot therefore be the sole pre-occupation of the cosmic Law or the sole principle of determination of the workings of Karma,"⁶ for the sole significance of the universe is not the antinomy of good and evil. The terms good and evil, coined by the ethical man are relative terms helpful in a transitional stage of man's evolution. Below the ethical is the infra ethical, and above this transitional ethical sense is the ultra ethical in which the duality and opposition disappear. Moreover, the universal Spirit, the "omnipotent in this house of flesh" is not a rigid moralist, and the existence is not a vast world

system of rewards and whippings but an "omniscient ecstasy," playing with the million possibilities to reveal its freedom in the bonds of its creation. If this world-system had been a mechanical freak turning endlessly on a wheel of ignorance and existing somehow to serve as a school of sin and virtue, it would have defeated its purpose and hardly appealed to our intelligence. It would be an irrational world hinged on uncertainty and our stepping out of this unreal existence by annihilation of the self would be the sole release. Since the soul or the being within is an immortal spark of the Divine, growing in knowledge, sweetness, light and strength; so it cannot be sent here solely to be put in a school of sin and virtue. This kind of "crude and primitive moral education" cannot be the meaning and purpose of the Law of Karma. The law is a spiral movement of spiritual evolution, an ordered march of man towards his divine manhood. This sort of primitive and barbaric justice is too puerile. It is a deviation from the line followed by the evolutionary impetus of the soul. The primitive notions of Karma are unable to decipher the significance of life's movements, its multi-mooded expression that contains something, "more than that of an infant coddled and whipped into virtuous ways."⁷

There is a lot of talk about luck or fortune that controls a very large element in our life. People labour under the belief that luck or fortune baulks their effort or result ruthlessly. While they see Fortune smiling on a man of inferior energy, bestowing on him the prize without effort, and try to find the cause of these "caprices of Fortune in the hidden past." This measuring good and bad destiny in terms of wealth and external possession is itself capricious and fanciful. The law of Karma, its tangled process cannot be restricted to the estimation of superficial human feeling of outward good fortune and ill fortune. This simple solution of the caprices of Destiny in terms of good luck and bad luck—a return of a forgotten virtuous action or a return for a sin or crime—is itself capricious. It is forcing of a human standard into "the larger, freer and more comprehensive ways of the Cosmic Intelligence."⁸ This notion of good-luck and bad-luck put forward by the human mind is based on an "unsound reasoning" wallowing in the mud of despondency and confusion. Coming out of this mud-puddle, we find deeper and stronger foundation for the Law of Karma. The reactions of Nature have also an inherent value other than meant as reward and punishment. It is the "value of the lessons of experience in the soul's cosmic training."⁹ The

Cosmic Energy does not work in terms of good and evil but in different ways, according to the "need of the being" and the "intention of the cosmic power in its action." This vast interplay of individual energies, influencing and being affected by the energies of others are further under the impact of the universal Forces. It is so complex, multifarious and tangled-web of forces that it cannot be wholly determined by the one factor of an all-governing moral law. For example, in our touching fire and burning the finger there involves not so much theory of reward and punishment but an experience of our relation with things that widen the circle of experience in terms of growing consciousness becoming more and more perceptive of that relation. According to Sri Aurobindo, "in all Nature's dealings with us there is a relation of things and there is a corresponding lesson of experience."¹⁰

What we call good fortune and evil fortune; pleasure and pain, happiness and misery are not to be taken as incentives, and deterrents in our choice of good and evil. They are to be taken as part of experience and meant for growth. The purpose of soul's existence is not a superficial happiness and material success but to press out of the grapes of pleasure and pain, good and bad; the wine of joy that does not drag sorrow as its shade. Even sometimes, the soul for its rapid development and growth accepts or chooses poverty, misfortune and suffering as helpful means in accelerating its process of divine evolution. Who needs a system of rewards and punishments to follow the path of good and shun the path of evil? Not the truly ethical being, for whom to be happy and righteous is a part of his nature. Virtue to him is living in his own law of nature; falling from the law invites suffering. Is not the system of rewards and punishments rooted in selfishness, and commercial bargaining of self-interest, all too human tinged with a baser motive? In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "Human beings have erected the rule of reward and punishment in order to restrain the doings of things harmful to the community and encourage what is helpful to it but to erect the human device into a general law of cosmic nature or law of the supreme being or the supreme law of existence is a procedure of doubtful value."¹¹ Now, there are others who hold that the Law of Karma is the determinant, and the governor of the evolution of life and soul in the universe forgetting that Karma is the line of soul's action that creates the circumstances of rebirth in a way to centre round its capital need to grow, to experience and exceed its boundaries. The Law of Karma is outward machinery for

maintaining the connecting links in the ceaseless flow of mighty action from the past to the present marching towards the future. The power within and power outside rides on the giant mechanism; regulates its working without contradicting the responsibility of the doer's freedom in the outcome of the action. In such an occult working of the karmic force, the triple Moirai of the Greeks re-installed by Modern Science as the Law of Nature, Heredity, the Environmental pressure operate as secondary forces, subordinate factors, time-bound accessories in a transitional stage of the soul's evolution. The soul in evolution implies many-sided complex experience of its endless becoming in endless time. This journey and pilgrimage of the soul is towards its destined self-unfolding in Nature, which gives the initial push and momentum to the wheel of Karma. The Law of Karma is not so simple that we can over-simplify it. It is as Sri Aurobindo points out, "complex and cannot be of a simple and exiguous texture or rigid and one-sided in its incidence."¹² It is not a working of a dead rotating matter. The cosmic organism itself is not entirely mechanical in character. There is the Thinker behind thought, doer of the act and the Law of Karma, so the outward machinery "cannot be elevated to a greater position as the sole and absolute determinant of life's workings."

The determinism of Karmic wheel has its sway over body, life and mind of human beings, only to the limited extent. If they are content to function in ignorance, ruled by falsehood and led by ego the determinism is most powerful. In this state of consciousness, freedom is not real freedom but only a sense of freedom. For a cleft in the consciousness has made man oblivious of his true self that is never bound or conditioned by the vagaries of thought. Separation due to ignorance has reduced man to the wave-consciousness exclusively absorbed in itself as a separate entity unaware of the sea that is the soul and life of all its activity. The egocentric life so impinge upon man that the sense of possessing a free and independent will is a highly illusory thing. This apparent freedom and self-assertion of the ego is pitiably subject to a thousand suggestions, impulsions and forces extraneous to its little person. "Our ego boasting of freedom is at every moment the slave, toy and puppet of countless beings, powers, forces, and influences in the universal Nature."¹³ Ignorant of itself in any essential sense of the word, the man is oblivious of its greater Self, the hidden sea. He sees himself as a wave (body) and calls himself the doer; totally unaware that it is the sea, the integral force of

being that throws conscious waves! It is the sense of 'I' that makes him say, "I am the doer and the enjoyer." It also makes him associate itself with its Karma to be bound in a mechanical determinism. This ignorance of our true nature is born of the ego-sense represented by a wave consciousness absorbed in its movement, living in that seeing nothing but what continues to pre-occupy its sense and mind. The mind too, lost in the swirl of natural forces cannot see with its indeterminate perception the Force behind that has determined its choice. Dogged by the hound of Fate, man lives in a closed field, unconscious or half-conscious instrument, unaware of its past preparation and future drift in the present whirl. The "I" that constructs "me" and "mine" and says, "I think, I will and I act," is itself being operated by a self-acting mechanism. Concealed from it is the working of an immanent divine Will that compels and guides it and shapes its purposes. Human will, a phenomenon of cause, and effect is not free as man in his egoistic consciousness is a Fortune's toy whirling under the fallacy that 'he thinks' or 'acts.' Actually, thought occur to us, will occur to us and act occur to us. In ignorance our ego-sense gathers around itself, and refers to itself all this flow of natural activities. Shut up in the narrow cell of egoistic personality man cannot know that Will as he is blinded and chained to his view point of ego and its desires. He cannot discern that an "executive cosmic force shapes us and dictates through our temperament and environment and mentality."¹⁴ Our actions and their results are the forms of thought that exist as individual formations of Cosmic Force, the hidden Will in man that imparts the impulse.

The freedom of human will at the ignorant ego-desire-level is a palpable fiction. It is a determined stream of action, and process impelled by the past momentum, gathering fresh mass for the future. How is such a will free when it is further conditioned by the forces of heredity, training and environment. Moreover, the world converging in the individual too determines his will at a given moment, and even its action at a given space. Beyond and below the tip of surface human consciousness, (on which it imposes name and form and identifies with it) there is the past Inconscient sea and beyond the 'I' and 'me' circle, there lie stretches of the environmental, the national, the global, the universal, and the Transcendental consciousness. All these different layers of consciousness act, and interact and have their consequences on the collective Karma of humanity in which each is responsible for what he does, as in essence

a drop of water is one with the sea. There is no egoistic freewill nurtured by falsehood and ignorance; strengthened by greed and selfishness that lives in the sensations of desire soul. The will of an excessive individualism of the human ego is not free but a phenomenon bound in a chain of cause and effect. Human will working under the impulse of ego and desire is not free. Free will is really free under certain soul conditions, governed by the state of consciousness in which we dwell. Free will is reached in the soul, when we become conscious of its presence and allow ourselves to be governed in our life activities by its presence, and will that reflect itself in our life.

“Our soul from its mysterious chamber acts:
Its influence pressing on our heart and mind
Pushes them to exceed their mortal selves.
It seeks for Good and Beauty and for God.”

— *Savitri*, B7, C2.

The ego-consciousness swollen with pride and vanity of individualism fancies it can act on its own accord in isolation, in complete liberty without any determination other than his egoistic will, is an attitude that digs its own dungeon, sows its own seeds, prepares its own destiny. It is not a single unrelated movement that determines but the tangled karmic law in which the bubble-consciousness of the individual ego is like a ripple or a wave that ebbs and flows and bursts its heart in the blue deep. As long as the individual or communal ego continues to live in its isolated freedom to be oneself alone, so long that individual or community shall continue to whirl with the wheel of Fate. The ‘I,’ ‘me,’ and ‘mine,’ the off shoots of ego-consciousness do not represent the real I, the Individual but only a formation of Nature. They are not a lasting truth and can never be our essential part. It is ego or ‘I’ that sets the wheel of Fortune or Fate in motion and makes man somersault on the roads of good and evil and all the dual throng. To stop the wheel of Karma as a determining Force, we have to liberate ourselves from the ego. It is not too easy to discover the Will in us that is totally free. The ego and desire baulk the way. The Ego has assumed form. Its thought-centralization has weaved a web of feeling and sensation; a tangle of hopes and desires around the form of physical consciousness. Therefore,

"Man's natural joy of life is over cast
 And sorrow is his nurse of destiny
 The animal's thoughtless joy is left behind,
 Care and reflection burden his daily works."

—Savitri, B11, C4

Yet the Ego or 'I' can liberate itself from the Law of Karma, change Fate into a shaping power of the Will hidden within, if it consents either to stretch itself into Infinity or offer itself to the Flame, to be new born as the golden-child of the Divine Mother. It is not possible to recognize the supreme Will with our deceptive sense instruments and the blind and imprisoned intelligence. If the 'I' consents to change, to be no longer itself but something else, greater and better, then a sure way is paved for its pilgrimage. It has to tilt its consciousness to look deeply into its own constitution and constituents. Immediately it shall dawn on us that body, mind and ego are waves of that sea of force in action, and do not govern it but by it are governed and directed. The 'wave' or ego-consciousness due to its oblivion cuts itself from the hidden sea, the integral conscious being that is the source of its existence and movement. This self-oblivion is not lasting, as there is no essential ignorance, save that which one chooses. This self-oblivion contains within it all the consciousness it has forgotten. Ego, a twilight shadow of the real person is not the real subject that is changeless nor it contains the power of an operating will that dominates man internally and externally. Within man is consciousness, the soul or the spirit and all that he externally or superficially is and does, is not ego but Nature that shapes and dictates.

The imperfect superficial 'I' that creates the shackles of Fate is a temporary formation and not worth preservation. It can have transformation and an alchemic change if it becomes more luminous in knowledge, and surrenders to be "moulded in the image of the eternal beauty." To become thus, it has to transcend the frog-consciousness and leap out of the well of Inconscience to be progressive towards the divinity of the secret Spirit. The representative of the secret Spirit, the psychic entity is the spiritual individual in us, the person that we are and not the 'I' of this moment which is a mere formation, a distorted reflection of this inner person. The Will or Force in the world that determines the results of the individual's action works in him (concealed by his thought)

the part he shall take in the determination of the whole. The ignorant 'I' due to its selfishness, seizes on this Force and calls 'my will.' But 'I' and 'mine' are masks, which conceal what they cannot reveal. The operations of the Karmic force is like a game of hide and seek between the Power in things, and Power in man enacting on the world stage according to the rules of the game. If there is any "match-fixing" in terms of the conditions laid down by the preference of the ego, and 'I' starts playing entirely at cross purposes with the hidden Will, (that is same within and without) and starts adoring itself under many pretences as its own good; then it immediately feels itself seized by the "heavy hand of Fate," like the "oppression of the tyrant or the resistance of a blind and unintelligent power."¹⁵ The egoist absorbed in its own need and view point to adore self openly fails to see the heavy hand of the "firm" Teacher and His stern, yet loving compulsion in things." Therefore in his own interest that he must "progress by self-will, struggle and suffering because it has not yet learnt to progress by obedience."¹⁶

This gives us clue that Karma, the cause of destiny is not a rigid and sterilising Fatalism. It is a power that endows the evolution of life and Nature, a spiritual significance far wider and deeper in meaning, imposed by the interaction of mechanical particles moving in space according to the mechanical laws. In the interaction of atoms, there is at work conscious force and will. Otherwise, the outward mechanism of the universe would dwindle into a huge soulless determinism of a "monstrous pounding of spring and piston." The cosmos opposite to chaos does not make a picture of a giant machine but gives a glimpse of the "logic of the infinite," the mathematical Thinker who looses itself in the rhythm and harmony of endless becoming. Otherwise, creation remains forever a "purposeless mystery," a painful and miserable paradox with no key and

 "...Our souls, upon the wheel of God
 Forever turning, they arrive and go,
 Married and sundered in the magic round
Of the great Dancer of the boundless dance."¹⁷

Therefore, this play of Energy we call universe has a deep spiritual significance without which our being, the play of life on the world stage would be a "temporary minute anomaly incomprehensibly occurring in

that senseless vastness,"¹⁸ and humanity forever caught in a dire mystery of grief and pain helplessly watching how.

"All passes here, nothing remains the same,
None is for any on this transient globe.
He whom thou lovest now, a stranger came,
And into a far strangeness shall depart."¹⁹

In the Hindu Śāstra or science we have a vision of the Absolute, who by virtue of its unique Power manifests itself as diversified universe i.e. loosing or putting forth the countless orders of cosmic and individual formations. Shakti, the consciousness-Force of the Supreme, executes His Will in laying out the gigantic lines of Karma even "the hour before the Gods awake." Apparently, the cosmic order looks as a complicated and tangled web of a mechanical Nature. Yet, deeper within this mechanical working one discerns an ordered march of progressive values, self-expression and a self-determination proceeding from the Truth-light and Truth-force. The Karmic-wheel that has the cycles of movement has made the flowery lap of earth to be a "cradle for the arriving God."²⁰

In arriving of the God, there is behind the terrestrial scene the seed of the great sacrifice, the mighty action of the Bride of Brahma, the Consciousness-Force plunging in the Matter's nescience, hiding herself as though falling asleep in the mystic cave of the Inconscience; a state of Nothingness, pregnant or hiding something. This is technically termed the Involution that precedes Evolution. Sacrifice, the birthplace of action is also the purpose and goal of Karma. It reveals the mystery of the five-elements, their manipulation or "panchikarn" by the Force for initiating the tardy process of earth's evolution. The "sacrifice" pulls the spark-soul out of the Inconscience; lits its flame of aspiration, awakens the seed of divine-desire to make it come out of the "tenebrous-womb"²¹ of Nothingness: -

"To raise its head and look for the absent light
Straining closed eyes of vanishing memory
Like One who searches for a bygone self..."²²

The soul opening its eyelids like a bud that bursts its heart to make its way out of the "tenebrous-womb;" the pregnant Nothingness is an occult

action that gives a starting push, an activating energy of chit-shakti to the "tardy" process of mortality, and makes onset of the evolution of the soul in a process of endless births in endless time. The cycles of action-reaction of the soul-forces stretch into millions and millions years to make the soul climb from a crawling worm to the stage of a human being; the complex of mentalized living matter that has yet to hammer on and

"... Strive to workout the eternal will,
And shape the life divine in mortal forms."

—Savitri

This movement of manifestation is the mighty Action of out rolling of gathered coiled up power from the intricate, inert material inconscience to be spread out, and multifariously become a creative drama of the "million bodied one." All this is not a Newtonian machine completely casual and determined, a mechanical occurrence, and a definite cause with a definite effect, to give an appearance of a mechanical determinism. For every cause at its objective level is a tangle of physical, vital, and mental knots tied to the occult and spiritual implications. The Laplacian or the Classical Determinism would be true, if the evolving forms conducted themselves like machines devoid of intelligence or purpose in their movement and behaviour. In propounding uncertainty principle, Heisenberg has brought in contradiction in the law of causality. It has created indecisiveness in the theory of Determinism, which fails to explain how an electromagnetic radiation of high energy (at the same time and place) can create two particles of opposite charges. As in terms of strict causality, it is hard to fix the position of particles in an electromagnetic field behaving in a diametrically opposite manner. The principle of uncertainty renders the law of causality inapplicable to the behaviour of an electron moving in one of its orbits within the atom. Under the laws of the mechanics, the experimenter can hardly delve into the mysterious working of the microphysical world, and determine the position of the electron that at any given instant bewilders with its erratic behaviour. Certainly, as far as the phenomenal universe is concerned, the emphasis ought to fall on causality. But, as Max Planck in his book, "Where Is Science Going?" says: "The concept of causality is something transcendental which is quite independent of the nature of the researcher..." In determining causality, a due weight and thought on the working of the cosmic workshop is necessary, in which any change

anywhere stimulates forces of reaction somewhere. In this gigantic cosmic-web of relatedness noting is single; but "all things by law divine in one another's mingle," and as sings Shelley:

"No sister flower would be forgiven,
If it disdained its brother."

In this divine democratic order, the law of Karma links together character and destiny, seeming two opposites meet together in a way, that the position of human will in this giant web of Cosmic workshop resembles the fate and "freewill" of an Electron controlled by the operating field. As long as man like an Electron remains attached to an atom or a molecule of Ego, so long no freedom or liberation is possible. Just as in photoelectric effect sudden interactions liberate electrons from the atoms; so in the case of man, when the Grace removes the mask of ego, the human will come under the alchemic power of the supreme Will, like the electron becomes free to move under the influence of an electric field. Behind the cosmic web of thought, the apprehension of the mathematical Thinker made the visionary scientist Einstein think of a cosmic determinism, impressing the mind the idea of "freewill" as an illusion. Nonetheless, his observation of the quantum theory at least within the framework of scientific thought pictures a "weakening of the concept of causality" to present some scope to the adherents of free will. But, Spinoza's 'intellectual love of God' did not see anything of the free will in the movement of thoughts and acts determined by some cause or another in an endlessly rotating circle. So goes the pessimistic strain of Schopenhaur in his world-weariness exclaiming: "Man can do what he wills but he cannot will what he will." Entrapped in one's thought, the key to the paradox of human life could not be got by these thinkers who saw man hanging in between two extremes and living:

"...like some secret players' mask,
He knows not even what his lips shall speak.
For a mysterious Power compels his steps,
And life is stronger than his trembling soul."²³

The outward mechanism of the Karmic law is a complex of mind-life-body forces. It is an elusive process of Nature, "the executrix" who is the field of law and process, and the "master of all other wills." The will of

the individual is not a phenomenon of an isolated independence, as much as the part of a secret divine Will, expressing itself in the universality and in each particular temporal process and things. In the law of relatedness, the all-outruling Transcendence includes individual being, and Nature in Its universal Being. This Power or Presence that harbours all infinity is the Lord of the Gita dwelling within the heart of all existence, turning all creatures as if mounted on a machine by the illusion of Nature. In this All-existence, the individual finds his existence as a part of the All-will and All-knowledge; working in him some in-calculable purpose of which the individual can become aware, as it is the same Will playing differently in different forms of the world. The personal will is one of its forces. It is active not only in the world, and in the present moment of individual's life, but in the hour of his birth also. The Fate and freewill are the two truths or factors of existence operating simultaneously in our lives. All-Will working in me, as my Fate is the fountainhead of Freedom, which no speech of man can describe. The great antinomy of Fate-freewill is abrogated as soon as my ego breaks and emerges from "the mould in which it has taken refuge from its divine pursuer."²⁴ Then my free-will becomes God-will and "Fate put off her mask," to reveal the meaning and significance of the Karma which is:

"His Will must be worked out in human breasts,
Against the Evil that rises from the gulfs,
Against man's ignorance and his obstinate strength,
Against the deep folly of his human mind,
Against the blind reluctance of his human heart."²⁵

Thus, it is truism to say that there is no discernible accidental freak in our going, and coming, no working of a stray chance in the dispensation of the results of our actions. In the fluid and flexible determining power of the Spirit in its mysterious working, destiny and self-effort, freedom and its power of determination are like thought and form in a sentence woven inextricably in a complex web of life's poem. Hindu explanation of Fate is 'Karma,' which is in no way a "rigid and sterilising fatalism." Why? Because, here one's action is the determining factor in the germination of results, which becomes the Fate or Bhagya of the individual to be continued till a counter action recharges the whole energy with a fresh momentum to reverse the gear for an ascending scale.

Till then, the individual being is no more than automation in a life of colliding chances or a random certitude exclaiming like Dryden in helplessness and uneasiness characteristic of a fatalistic mood of heavy pessimism that cries in disgust:

"Tis Fate flings the dice,
And as she flings
Of Kings makes peasants
And of peasants Kings."

In a similar strain of pessimistic disgust Hardy too vents: "What is human will against pre-determination," and answers not whether this "pre-destination" is a cause outside the phenomena, or within it issuing in thought, and act determined by the character that has become destiny? Is not the logic of Fate for deeper and subtler than the laws of a machine or what human calculations figure out from an imperfect sensory data? It is the habit of the vital-mind in man to enjoy "tears in mortal things" by weaving a web of words that fondly "create the doom they fear," and so turn the marvel of life into the "art gone wry."²⁶

The Fate that has woven a giant web of causes and effects around us is the doom we fear. Is not it like a cocoon in which butterfly is caught? Is this web extraneous to us, imposed by the power outside us, or a line of our Karmic repetition binding us with the past, and the future like space-time continuum that Einstein saw so linked together to give an appearance of finite-infinity: a conjunction of the hoary past with the future? The part of Karma, constructed under the impulse of egoistic mind's hankering after vital desires and cravings etc., is the mixture of ignorance and falsehood, as the result of human stupidity that tries to raise its petty rules of life, and its puny standards into the law and aim of creation. When it is said that every occurrence is predetermined it does not denote a denial of free will; but a complimentary, and not an exclusive or antithetical nature of character and destiny, as fate and free will are reverse and obverse sides of the same coin. The fundamental truth of existence is that freedom and determinism are two aspects of same energy. In the drama of the transcendent Shakti, it is her self-determinism in the form of the cosmos carrying it with the freedom of the secret self-determinism of the individual. The law of Karma, functioning in terms of the evolving image of man is subject to his choice as the responsible

agent in every thing that he does. In a law or chain of Karma there are two sides of existence: one side of existence under the region of law is the outer mind, life and body subject to the mechanism of Nature. This limited and bound mechanism of Nature cannot go on by itself. It requires a higher generalization of the unlimited to explain itself, for the bound can only be explained by that which is unbound, the cause by the uncaused, and motion by the motionless behind the motion. The other side is man's spiritual freedom that endows man with strength to be mightier than the sensational or vital forces of the universe. "Even what is determined by Fate," writes Sri Aurobindo, "has to be worked out, actually is worked by the play of forces and in this play there is no absolute rigidity discoverable. Personal will or endeavour is one of those forces."²⁷ The moment one turns away from the ordinary to the spiritual life a higher power or a higher source intervenes and the narrow fixed lines disappear. The power that annuls the rigid lines of Karma also re-creates the lines of tomorrow's fresh fields and pastures new. The higher lines of Karma are not bound by any desire or egoistic impulse in action. It is a psychic energy flowing outwards as the divine power to do the divine work and sing the melodies of the Infinite. "The entire past can vanish," writes K.D. Sethena, "if the soul can give itself entirely to the Divine. The Mother has said that all Karma can be wiped out at a stroke by a sweeping self-dedication to the Divine. This would be changing of the past in the most radical sense."²⁸ So, instead of crying to gods, we should call the Mother, who is the cause of all and alone can change "time's dragon base," break the iron laws the "long dragging chains of events which appear to make our present a vanishing link between an unchangeable past, and an ineluctable future is just a superficial impression. According to her the universe is re-created every second, so that we are essentially free."²⁹

In this ever recreated universe, the soul within us in a pilgrim of eternity, a being from the Infinite, and his plunge into the obscurity of Matter is an adventure of consciousness. The soul's entering into Ignorance contains some cosmic purpose; some larger principle of being that has to be worked out through Ignorance. Even within the scheme of law and logic, the Diving's perpetual freedom keeps smiling at the soul; goading him towards its full spiritual perfection, a passage into an immortal consciousness, knowledge, strength, beauty, divine purity and power. It is for this spiritual growth the law of Karma functions with a freedom

that is itself self-determination. This discernment of an intimate working of Fate and freewill is an intuitive experience of Sri Aurobindo's "Savitri" that helps us to discern the Divine Magician's freedom pacing in the same step with Law with an ample freedom to remake oneself at every step. This "intuition," writes K.D. Sethena, "has always been a puzzle in a cosmos of causality in the scientific view, a cosmos of foreknowledge, and fate in the spiritual vision." In this divine democratic pattern of God's manifestation "at each instant there is no determination from either the past or the future, and the cosmos is born straight out of eternity, an utter free will, an absolute liberty to choose would be just a thing expected."³⁰

The meaning of soul's birth in the body is for self-expression and self-experience. In principle, Karma is not the working out of a mechanism of Law but an instrument of a secret consciousness working through mind, life and body for the development of soul-nature through cosmic Ignorance, and its growth out of Ignorance. The secret evolutionary impetus progressively liberates Life and Mind out of matter, and still it goes on till it ushers in the manifestation of what Sri Aurobindo terms the Supermind—the Truth-Consciousness beyond the levels of Mind. For that to happen, the different personalities of man with their criss-cross lines of karmic-formation, jostling and struggling for perfect fulfilment—must undergo fourfold discipline of Physical, Vital, Mental and Psychic education. Education is a dynamic process for activating the weak, inert physical self, charging it with the energy latent in its inconscient depths. This action of tapping the latent Force is a grand Karma yoga of re-materialising the physical life and imposing on it the divine mould. To achieve the ideal of perfect harmony and perfect beauty of physical body, one has to change the lines of vital and mental personalities, to make them to collaborate in the divine scheme of things. As long as the vital energy goes on weaving around life, the yarn of good and evil, it keeps man like a buffalo wallowing in the mud-pond of desires, passions, painful feelings and inordinate emotions. It is education as a mode of sadhana or thought-invigorating force that chalks out the ascending lines of Karma that alone can link it with the universal life and make it manifest invincible power and strength. The Body-Life-Mind, the triple cords of existence, different in name and respective functions are in principle linked together as the instruments of the Conscious Being. The laws or energies of mind that entrap it in error and falsehood are meant to liberate it from the binding Karma and make it the vehicle of the infallible knowledge:

"For noting is known while ought remains concealed;

The Truth known only when all is seen."

—Savitri, B2, C10.

Likewise, the Aesthetic-self made tipsy by the pleasure of skin-deep consciousness limited to the life of sensations, shall cease to trade in flesh and commercialise beauty. When the eye is made single by the light of knowledge, the spell of divine fragrance is put on the Aesthetic-self to be enamoured by a "miracle of eternal beauty." The higher lines of action open the way for the Leader, the soul or the conscious Being to come forward to replace the Ego and spiritualise the mind, heart, and breathing frame. Then comes to us an awareness that love is not a bargaining of skin-consciousness but a "glory from the eternity's spheres" and —

"To live, to love, are signs of infinite things."

The working out of the ascending order of Karma reveals at every point the stamp of Wisdom, the Idea at work in the march of the soul. The psychic consciousness, the self-realisation that is obtained by the grace of the Master, "a veil that hung between the soul and Light" is lifted; the existence that appears a vale of tears to turbid mental consciousness discloses new meaning, its forms waft strange fragrance enough to transport Reason into the "bright kingdoms of the rising sun."³¹ The soul as the leader of the way is also the deputy of the aspiring world. Its coming to the front as the Leader of the way, gives new dimensions, and imparts a new force to the Law of Karma. Being the real subject the soul is the master of its instruments—not like body, life and mind, a creature and slave of the mechanical nature. In the words of the Gita "na Karma lipyate nare." Unlike mind, life and matter, the soul is not a "formation of the stream of universal energy but itself the former and creator of its own Karma."³² The spark of the Divine, the soul—the power of Self-existence that manifest the universe—uses the triple karma of mind-life-body complex to evolve further to spiritual and supramental levels when the probability of rematerializing Matter into a new matter or super matter is made certain, and the law of Karma becomes a mode of living a life of freedom in the bonds of creation. This is the work or Karma for which the soul has accepted the birth. And

"Till all is done for which stars were made,
 Till the heart discovers God,
 And the soul knows itself. And even then
 There is no end."

—*Sri Aurobindo: Is this the End?*

In the doctrine of reincarnation and Karma, the present hour is a decisive factor to relive, re-pattern, and remodel the stored-up immense energies of the past into an ever-widening circumference of future perfection. The doctrine of reincarnation and karma assures us writes Sri Aurobindo, "with immense vistas and enormously enhances the value of effort and action."³³ Karma that generates the present also chisels the subsequent future of man not "according to the devices of our reason or fictions of our intelligence but according to the truth of what man is, and the real soul and meaning of what he does,"³⁴ in tune with his 'prakriti' or nature or swabhava of each evolving form.

The law of Karma, the outward machinery cannot be elevated to the sole and absolute determinant of the evolution of life, and soul's purpose in existence. In that case it reduces cosmos to mechanical in character and turns all into a rigid process. But writes Sri Aurobindo, "all is not Law and Process, there is also Being and Consciousness, there is not only machinery but a Spirit in things, not only Nature and law of cosmos but a Cosmic Spirit, not only a process of mind and life and body but a soul in the natural creature."³⁵ The soul in the natural creature is the real 'I,' the spiritual being always greater than its Karma, who as Swami Rama Sings:

In the floods of life,
 In the storms of deeds
 Up and down I fly
 From birth to grave
 A changing sea of glowing life
 In the whistling loom of time
 Weave the living robe of Deity."

In this realization and attitude, Karma is not bondage for the golden children of the Mother-Master omnipotent Divine who do not think of any escape or liberation as nothing is bound. These children delight in the drama of endless birth in endless time and love to play eternally, the game of being and becoming in the eternal garden. Unlike ignorant mortals, the ego and desire cannot touch the children of the Omniscient Ecstasy whose thoughts and feelings and dreams are gathered in the perpetual remembrance of the Eternal Now:

"The ocean vast of Time
Spread out before us with its infinite surges,
Its symphonies sublime."³⁶

The existence of the soul is implied in the sequence of rebirths. Otherwise who is going to take birth, and how can a chain of karma be forged in the process of birth and death in which:

"...future and present
Were living in the past
They are one image that our wills complaisant
Into three schemes have cast."³⁷

The soul travelling from earth to heaven and heaven to earth creates out of the "three schemes," a local habitation and name to enact its drama of evolution. The past effaced from the memory lives with us as momentum to push forward-

"Nor with one life we end."³⁸
Because as "Savitri" puts it:
"The will of the Timeless working out in Time,
In the free absolute steps of cosmic Truth."

In the "steps of cosmic Truth" fate and free will, the two sides of a vast and complex karmic order ebb and flow in the cycles of birth, death, rebirth, and unroll in a ceaseless process the Action of the Dramatist, who has veiled Himself in His acting and all action is dramatised under His direction on the stage of Space-Time continuum which is He Himself. This veil of Space-Time continuum in which the Spirit wraps itself to direct

the drama of suspense and mystery by remaining hidden from the public haunt, enacting it in the form of evolving souls groping in the darkness for light.

"And even from this veil of mind the spirit
Looks out sometimes and sees
The bygone aeons that our lives inherit
The unborn centuries."³⁹

The unborn centuries are the outcome of "bygone aeons" gradually materializing the purpose of creation, the divine-man in making and the consequent re-materialization of matter as:

"Life only is or death is life disguised,
Life a short death until by life we are surprised."⁴⁰

The cryptic karmic lines comprise a giant web of forces ramified in a manner that hardly permit the soul any digression from the path or any neglect of the implicit purpose of creation. The 'hero' who has nothing to do with the ego, cannot turn tail from the battlefield, leaving the task (for which it has accepted the birth) undone and unfinished. The swing or rhythm of Karma is set by the dance of the creative Being who endows both individual and universal existence with a purpose, a direction and strength to tread the dolorous path of birth and death-the long and tardy steps of evolution. The Karmic energy that dances before him in the forms of mechanical, physical, biological, chemical, electrical and cosmic energies are unlike rigid, and blind play of the electric hordes. It is Force as veiled actors and,

"For life and mind and their glory and debate,
Are the slow prelude of a vaster theme."⁴¹

The secret Self at the centre of human existence is the delegate of the Transcendent. The inner lines of the forces that are invisible to us are "truths of soul process" and without going into "depths" how can world be known, because:

"The visible has its roots in the unseen
And each invisible hides what it can mean
In a yet deeper invisible, unknown."⁴²

The Deity that controls and shapes and directs is not indifferent to our tears and toil and "The soul suffering is not eternity's key."

The motive force of Karma in which human life ebbs and flows is meant to accelerate the upward march of the soul from the inertia of a dull stone to the dynamics of the thinking mind, till it; "Turn to the miracle summits yet unknown," for

"Man is a narrow bridge, a call that grows,
His soul the dim bud of God's flaming rose."⁴³

The wheel of Karma whirls in the swing of individual's will to be, and become in the process of endless becoming. As creation itself is an act of freedom of the limitless, to limit itself to find freedom in the arms of its creation so the Spirit's consent is implied and "freedom walks in the same pace with law." The soul acting itself out in a human form his role in the universe is in reality:

"Artist of his own beauty and delight
Immortal in our mortal poverty
This sculptor of the forms of the Infinite,
This screened unrecognized Inhabitant,
Initiate of his own veiled mysteries."

—*Savitri*, B1 C3.

The sublime order of Karmic-energy, its action in the individual and the universe, is no egoistic satisfaction in terms of moral evil and good. The yogic-karma or action done in Krishna or soul-consciousness is beyond the reach of legal justice. The human concoctions and sanctions fall far below in estimating the motive and purpose of yogic-karma. In our egoistic selfishness we hunt for the objects of pleasure, and avoid all that is painful and displeasing. While in the ascending curve of Karma, the happiness and sorrow, good and evil do not remain forever the main concern of the soul. The real consequence of karma is the growth, the

evolving of a new dynamic order, a perpetual process of spiritual evolution, widening, deepening and rising to the heights, and eventually bringing down of the power that can spiritualise the mentalized-living-matter. Therefore,

"The gods do Well
Who put before us one decisive choice,
Either to conquer with one lion leap
Or end in glorious battle."⁴⁴

The karma that involves conquest in a glorious battle is rooted in the principle of 'dharma' that binds each and all in a web of relationship and love. It is the principle of unity that directs and leads, and not gods that are ruled by this Principle. It is

"A mind, not iron gods, with laws,
Deaf and inevitable, over rules."⁴⁵

If "Fate orders all" then, exclaims Aslaug in "Erice,"
"Fate I now
Have recognised all the worlds' mystic will
That loves and labours."

The real purpose, the essential sense of the karmic-energy is to be extracted spiritually in occult terms as attar from a rose. When after repeated births, the clouds of egoism disappear at the dawn of self-knowledge, the lower lines of karma fall from the mental being like the bundle of sins form the Christian in the "Pilgrims Progress," and the eternal pilgrim begins to tread higher lines of karma:

"Armoured with love and faith and sacred joy
A traveler to the Eternal's house."⁴⁶

Karma, the dynamic passion of the Force sets before itself the Himalayan peaks of consciousness to scale, and not less than infinite possession, an endless perfection is the meaning and purpose of soul's action in creation for,

"The formless Everlasting move in it,
Seeking its own perfect form in soul and things."⁴⁷

Therefore, we go on till we conquer or perish. For us it is "more heroic":

"To battle with than to accept calamity,
Unless indeed all thinking out is vain.
And Fate our only mover."⁴⁸

As; "All is not finished in the unseen decree!" and,

".... thought for a godlike birth
Broadens the mould of our mortality."⁴⁹

In this "godlike birth" biological, physical and intellectual evolution is a stepping-stone, a preparation for that impossible to happen for "impossible is a hint of what shall be" as is the "mortal the door to immortality."⁵⁰ Therefore, the painful labour of the earth, her throes of endless birth, this "vain toil of brief living things" is real and significant, and not meaningless and futile. If pain comes as "the dark intruding god" ⁵¹ stamped with a "deep sense of fate," it is a necessity without which the hard crust of inconscience and inertia could not be penetrated, and the release of mind "hidden in Matter's trance" could not be made possible. Therefore,

"Pain is the hammer of gods to break
A dead resistance in the mortal's heart
His slow inertia of living stone."⁵²

For: -

"If the heart were not faced to want and weep
His soul would have lain down content at ease
And never thought to exceed the human start
And never learned to climb towards the sun."⁵³

Pain and joy, the "tenebrous two" live together as:

“...In the very temple of Delight
Veil'd melancholy has her sovran shine.”

— *John Keats: “Ode to Melancholy”*

Pain spells out the meaning of Delight. It tears the curtain of forgetfulness from the soul, the pilgrim of eternity, and not a way-worn wonderer “strayed in blind alleys of Time and chance” to be burdened by the heavy and weary weight of this unintelligible world, finding “no issue from a meaningless world.” As pain, suffering, disease, death and tears still continue to be the ruling power of Fate, therefore, in the present conditions of ignorance and falsehood every mortal creature:

“Is Nature's fool and Godhead's struggling birth,
A demigod and a demon and brute,
The slave and the creator of his fate.”⁵⁴

The interaction of the “tenebrous two” brews love-hate, good bad and god-asura. The dualities of Nature keep man rolling up and down oppressed by the weight of its hidden unconscious influences of the past. It looks as if some invincible Hand (the Will within and Will ruling the universe) inscribes in the scroll (charge sheet of deeds) of life what has been chosen, thought and willed. The present cycle of life moves on the adumbrated lines of the past. Man wrapped in mortal poverty, forgetful of the latent influences, velleities, impressions that persist to render him a puppet of the Moving Finger. Thus caught in a self-constructed trap, the individual finds himself powerless to cancel the lines of the scroll. Even all his ‘piety’ and ‘wit’ cannot rescue him from the inevitable sufferings, as the reward of his generated energy. Thus, sings Omar Khyam,

“The Moving Finger writes,
and having writ,
Moves on” nor all your piety,
nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel
half a line,
Nor all your years wash out,
a word of it.”

For that one has to rise to the higher consciousness, the yogic consciousness that can kindle the flames to burn all past and write a new scroll, chalk out the lines of ascending scales. But, as long as mortal being labours under the falsehood and ignorance of his lower nature, the link between a deed, and its "inevitable retributory consequence" cannot be broken, canceled or annulled, as the poet-seer Swami Rama Tirtha has it in his poetry of facts:

"We build our future thought by thought

For good or bad and know it not.

Thought is another name for fate,

Choose then thy destiny and wait.

Let God in thee rise and say,

To adverse circumstance "obey"

And thy dear wish have its way."

According to the law of thought we do not hate a cruel and cunning, criminal and hypocrite, corrupt and sinful, arrogant and lusty politicians, capitalists, administrators, teachers, lawyers and judges encouraging inefficiency, issuing license for corruption, employing men and women in public offices and institutions as make-shift arrangements to fatten their ego and cater to their local and selfish interests. Instead, we pity then for their ignorance of the past, and the lurid flames they are generating for the future as reward of their actions. The pain they inflict on generations is enough to keep them seething in the infernal flames. The moment the result of the past merit is exhausted; the brimful is the pitcher of sin; the aftermath of sinful karma sends us somersaulting in the cold and callous arms of suffering and death. "Wickedness must reap its reward" is the warning of Sri Krishna. "That is what the Gods have enjoined." Every child at the time of its birth, as Professor B.V. Raman observes, is not a clean slate and "fresh creation" but has come either with trailing clouds of glory or dark stormy clouds of suffering or a mixture of both. He enters the earth-scene with an accumulated experience of "previous existence" in an evolutionary order. The present "inherent peculiarities" are the resultant effect of the past. The ingathered or stored up impressions or "sanskaras" of the current phase are like floppies stored in the "secret vaults of memory" to influence the ensuing lives. It hits back and is inescapable. The working of this natural law can be slow

in some cases and quick in others. In case of "prarabdha" Karma, deeds fructify now but Agāmi Karma i.e. the deeds contemplated for fructification in future lying latent only to be allocated in some future earth life.

The cosmic Action with its emphasis on the element of causality is a creative drama of the Consciousness-Force. It does not begin or end in illusion. If that would have been the case, the soul could not be the builder of its fate and pain "sculpturing men to greatness" would lose its sting and purpose. Matter is a concretisation of energy; a mode of consciousness, and consciousness without Being is impossibility. The doctrine that the world in an illusion misses in its twilight thought view the "immortal's meaning in the world" as:

"This world was not built with random bricks of chance,

A blind god is not destiny's architect

A conscious power has drawn the plan of life.

There is a meaning in each curve and line.

It is architecture high and grand

By many named and nameless masons built.⁵⁵

As Melancholy and Delight live in the same shrine, so Fate and Freedom go hand in hand as parts of a single truth. Even though seen as poles apart they are yet parts of the same Reality whose larger, unfettered freedom shapes and directs the steps of the cosmic truth enacted through countless lives. In an interchange of Nature and soul, the presiding eye of God arbitrates a process of truth we call Fate. In this creative drama, Energy energises itself as the source of active dynamism of all action-reaction phenomena of consequence and result, in which Fate is "a balance drawn in Destiny's bank" containing a "record of credit and debt transactions." We are not living in a void, as we have not come from a Void so our escape into blank Nothingness leaves the 'task' undone by neglecting the "divine utility of the cosmic workings." Moreover, the negation without affirmation falsifies its own purpose as shadow without light is impossibility. It leaves behind as Sri Aurobindo observes, "a stamp of unsatisfactory inadequacy," cutting the upward line of evolution. It also leaves unfulfilled the ancient longing of imparting immortal touches to Matter and divinising the clay. Above all, this cannot

be the end and purpose of Karma yoga, and the purpose of endless rounds of birth and death. The real karma yoga starts after the liberation from the iron laws and Nature's doom that culminates in the manifestation of the all-comprehending and all-reaching power of gnosis as: -

"A high and blank negation is not all,
A huge extinction is not God's last word,
Life's ultimate sense, the close of being's course,
The meaning of this great mysterious world."

God has not—as the Koran puts it—created this world in a "jest." The creation is a creative drama of the Conscious Force, the "upward gradations of the Spirit already climbed." The present widens the scope of the past accumulated treasure into a growing self-awareness of the soul's infinite becoming. So in this tragic comic drama, O man:

"Thy goal, the road thou choosiest are thy fate."

The soul is here with a "heaven sent task" to evolve to the heights of supermanhood, redeem the bleeding earth fallen on the thorns of life, and bring about a new world order of universal brotherhood. There is no escape from it. Any escape from Action, however high can neither redeem the fallen earth nor uplift the abandoned race. Escape cannot efface the tears in mortal things as it gives up life's paradox in disgust without finding key to it. Nonetheless, the golden children of the Golden Light ceaselessly aspire, labour and "hammer on." They know that no amount of human effort devoid of the Grace can bring victory in this field of Kurukshetra. The Victory is with the Divine and for the Divine. The fate of the soul has become a "battle and a ceaseless march." It is a terrible and a tough karma-yoga, a veritable sacrifice that makes us live dangerously, as

"A dark concealed hostility is lodged
In human depths, in the hidden heart of Time,
That claims the right to change and mar God's work."⁵⁶

Taking recourse to Sanyasa for an escape from the world is no answer to the "concealed hostility" that resists 'change' and is bent on to 'mar God's work.' Attainment of mukti, the personal salvation of the soul is

no problem, for the soul being immortal is never bound. It is the salvation of the body, the salvation of the earth for which the soul has accepted the "world's law of pain." He cannot turn from the march, which is a "battle and a pilgrimage," for in the words of Sri Krishna, the "great things are always done at the cost of one's life." Victory over the sons of Darkness is also a part of the mighty action. The lonely freedom does not satisfy because as Shelly felt, "To me who am a nerve over which do creep oft unfelt oppressions of earth." As such a "dreadful cord of sympathy" binds each actor with countless actors in this field of Action. The work cannot end till all is done—the gulfs are healed, evil turned back to its original good, and "sorrow lies upon the breasts of Bliss." Thus, we are constrained by the urgency of the task and the soul's purpose in life to

"Turn towards high Truth, aspire to love and peace."

To walk in safety and assurance we have to leave far behind us the current theory of Karma, and stick to a "more authentic and spiritual Truth at base of Nature's action" says Sri Aurobindo, because this Truth is a "far less mechanically calculable movement." We need to acquire new Consciousness through Education, as a pursuit of truth, the search for knowledge and a worship of Beauty. The need of education in an emerging global society is a mode of sadhana not limited to information, imparting training and skill, but much more than formal and informal education. In the next chapter we shall find that educational revolution on a global scale is the only antidote to modern malady. Suffice here to say that it is the emergence of the soul's consciousness and experience that fixes the norms and enlarges the lines of Karma. Karma in this sense is "no longer a Law but rather the many-sided dynamic truth of action and life, the organic movement here of the infinite." In this battle with fate of man, it is as Sri Aurobindo puts in his poem "The Divine Worker":

"Thy Force in me labours at its grandiose plan,
Indifferent to the Time-Snake's crawling length."

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Chapter - III

EDUCATION : A MODE OF SADHANA

Education as a mode of Sadhana is for the exceptional few given to the pursuit of Knowledge, not for Knowledge sake but what gives us a glimpse of the Thing-in-itself knowing which one knows everything. Such a few live in the prevailing sinister circus of society, fronting the stark realism of distorted system in which both teachers and administrators are caught in a bargaining business that has reduced the so-called institutions of learning into commercial tuck-shops, and breeding places of evil that is as ruinous as canker to rose. The writer as a teacher had an experience of working with the teachers corrupt to the core and addicted, sexually perverted, cunning, politically and communally motivated, shallow at the bottom, shrewd in their dealings to exploit both students and the Institutions. These teachers, the crazy creatures without any feature or future hate talent, burn in jealousy, hardly understand what teacher is and what teaching means. They are expert in the trade of selling their faulty prepared examination-oriented carbon notes to the class students whom they force to come for tuitions in their private tuck shops. These are the teachers who are seasoned sycophants to get maximum facilities of earning in the colleges; being at the same time valued fit persons for university and other lucrative assignments. Schools and colleges and the universities have become an arena for the dirty politics of the teachers, bureaucrats, the socialized politicians who have made education the prostitution of Institution, teaching the technique of applying "purje" (copying chits) in the examination and degrees and diplomas are sold and purchased and manipulated.

The writer was always a dreamer, dreaming big dreams that always clashed with the real. The ideal within goaded him to climb the stairway of surprise, make study or reading of books and teaching a way or an art of living in a widening circumference of consciousness. To read for knowledge, study for pleasure was already a way of life of the writer

that inspired him to join the noble profession, and become a teacher against the wishes of parents and others. Love of Wisdom as symbolized in a teacher dominated the writer, and after working in various administrative departments, he joined teaching profession with the idea to pursue his love of knowledge in an atmosphere free from the evil and corruption, he had already witnessed. The irony of a teacher drove him in a situation quite contrary to what he had dreamt. Sometimes changing conditions do not improve the situation. He was faced with a challenge, to be or not to be, that is to say, to be like others and earn money or remain in pursuit of knowledge, take up the cross and forgo all monetary incentives, promotions, suffer injustice, hate, jealousy with a peace of indifference, and live in this world and be out of it. The inner voice murmured, "Let studies pass into character and make education a mode of sadhana, for knowledge ought to be always higher and greater than money and social status. Know and realise the aim of education. Therefore, be a learner, and realize yourself eventually the secret of what I am." This is how the writer conducted himself during his more than thirty years teaching experience, knowing that one is one's own tragedy and comedy, and so responsible of one's action and thought that can make or mar one's life. For him it was opposite of what people think, live, conduct and behave. Already, the love of books had created in him the thirst to something afar—not cutoff from life but lived as a palpable experience in the midst of the crowd. Thus arose the need of education as a mode of sadhana; study as a means of "manifestation of perfection already in man." The irony of the teacher was that confronting the stark realism of the educational circus of the State; he had to feign as one of them, yet be away and beyond the system, living ideas inwardly, widening in consciousness. It was self-education and life-education; reading for lustres, the books like running brooks leading towards Self-realization as the highest objective of education. After all, "all life" in the memorable words of the Master "is only a lavish and manifold opportunity given us to discover, realise, express the Divine." The same idea expressed by Sri Aurobindo in still more memorable but in compact words: "All Life is yoga."

This chapter, "Education a mode of Sadhana" is for those (a very small minority) caught in this sinister circus of sorry schemes of the life, yet persist in their aspiration to make studies a means to something higher than mere pecuniary gain or worldly success. They are better than the

vast majority who pursue studies and educate themselves with the utilitarian motive. This 'motive' at its lowest level takes the form of commercialism. This is the ruling motive of their education. Acquiring qualification, earning money to get high positions is the criteria of their success in life. Owing to the obsession of the utilitarian commercial spirit, education has suffered worst degradation. It has made education cheap and paltry; it has debased and vulgarized study habits. The lifeless studies of students pursued blindly and mechanically, a repetitive burden on them has nothing creative, living and beautiful to be worthy of the altar. Studies pursued in this manner by the teachers and students offer no opportunity of disciplining themselves. They do not use studies for developing the mental faculties. Instead they work like robots to fulfil merely the outer conditions of an institution. Their purpose behind studies is the satisfaction of personal ends like ambition, vanity or like "a mental dram-drinking" of pedants, university scholars for displaying of their intellectual eminence. They study for the satisfaction of their ego or its ambitions or desires. To make education a mode of Sadhana is for them a hard nut to crack, for them as they use studies in its most derogative form of economic and social gain or mental pride.

This lure of money and status impels even a lazy schoolboy to run a rat race, become rich and gain a good social position. The cutthroat competition makes life a grave and business a battlefield where one has to fight. Ordinarily, school as an inevitable nuisance, usually is either boredom or the springboard of ambition. The boy finds at school some amusing chums to while away his time and sweeten the bitter pill of studies a little. The students work just enough not to annoy his teachers and parents. The ambitious one, the reasonable students arm themselves with a lot of good marks, diplomas and degrees to satisfy their dream of better life. To them, study is a process of learning, some branch of knowledge; a process of concentration, memory and a successful expression of the subject studied. At best to some with an empirical motive in education study at least chases their boredom by filling up some unfilled vacant hours. Their mental growth and acquisition of knowledge keep them going round and round the well like bulls of a Persian wheel, hardly fancying the depths of the well.

Our degree-oriented mechanical education berefts us of the power to delve deep into the well of consciousness hiding the coiled intelligence that has

power to stretch into infinity. Lost in the darkness of ignorance, we have forgotten our nature. We are unable to delve deep into the psychology of man to grasp the value and purpose of life and existence. While earning through foul means we forget that Man does not live by bread alone, and studies that pass into character is not a physical process. It is an integral psychological process by which we raise ourselves from the attachments of bread and body alone, to the highest godhead in us or above us. Love of knowledge means: "Not to think of living but only of loving will take you out of the world where life-problems exist,"² and are dissolved in harmony when we know:

"A death bound littleness is not all we are,
Immortal our forgotten vastnesses,
Await discovery, in our summit selves."³

Education: "e = out," and duco = I draw, makes learning of science and humanities, art and technology as helps to build character, cultivate absolute purity of heart and attain a co-ordination in thought and act. To "draw out," presents a challenge for the adventurous souls to make education a sadhana; study a vehicle of a greater self-finding and self-becoming. The discovery of the mystery that man is a key to the problems of existence, and education a mode of sadhana turns all study into a process of self-dedication by transcending the mental limits and opening to the heights of intuition that fulfils reason. The study as a means of sadhana, a greater joy in studying as a work of dedication is not for all. Different people have different motives in studying. The sense of wonder in studying, makes studies a means of searching, a quiet, steady, rational pursuit of knowledge besides developing the faculties of mind. "A student" as Samuel Johnson, had it "May eagerly be learning not to live but to reason." Study not only gives coherence to our thinking but also enlarges our intellectual horizon by raising mental capacities. Studies undoubtedly are useful for professional and social success. Studies, a complex set of activities of reading and writing has all comprehensive importance as a happy source of light to our benighted minds. The development and perfection of mental faculties through studies gives one a well-equipped mind for exploring some fields of knowledge. The primary function of studies is the widening of the mental horizons. The widening brings in the joy of a disinterested mental culture summed up "knowledge for knowledge sake."

Study for study sake as mental gymnastics organizes and enriches the mind and enhances thinking capacities. This attitude of true culture is much higher than the gross utilitarian commercial attitude, which is rampant all over the world. Yet this cultural aim cannot make Education a mode of sadhana and studies an ever-increasing urge to know the unknown more and more and become a perfect medium for its expression. The cultural aim of education is not the highest. It is not ultimate goal of life's activities. A mental training and discipline, knowledge of man and things, culture, capacities of useful kind are not an end but only a means and instrument. To have them is better but they are not the only things indispensable. Pursued with a spiritual motive studies direct towards their higher purpose. The right spirit in one's studies is to use them for a life of sadhana. This will depend on the spirit in which we do them. If done in true spirit they can be made a valuable aid to one's sadhana. Studies like each mode and each way can become in its own term a way of our sadhana. There can be no magic formula or a rigid method to make our studies a means of our sadhana. It is an essentially a personal question, and there can be no doubt that every occasion or event in life can be made a means for our inner growth and development. It is the attitude or spirit in which we receive them. Our attitude is determined by the aim we ascribe to education, the purpose of life and the evolutionary destiny of the evolving soul.

"Aimless life is always a miserable life,"⁴ says the Mother. Noble and high, broad and integral aim can be made the pole star of our existence. Now, the learning is meant for knowing and having the knowledge of the secrets of Nature and life. To educate means having capacity to master oneself and overcome one's incapacity and ignorance. The Mother says that such a goal should be "nobler and vaster, more generous and more true,"⁵ tending towards the highest and following the best aspiration for a higher and better. It is meant for the students of the 'Academy of the Future,' whose longing for knowledge makes them to "live dangerously" with men of status quo, tenaciously holding a system that is safe, rational, and comfortable. The student-sadaks who look ardently towards a more wholly and true future, the only "right and natural road," chalked out for them by the Master is "towards the summits."

In terms of aims and objectives the problem of education gains priority over all other problems of life. Education as a mode of sadhana is meant

to be a true flowering of an individual in consistent with the aim of life. The true aim of life is the progressive growth of consciousness in its totality. Education to be integral like yoga is to:

- a) Elevate our consciousness on all the levels of our being.
- b) Methodically develop our inner faculties.
- c) Bring out the latent potentialities of our being.
- d) New-shape and refine the crude and raw stuff of our surface being and nature.
- e) Re-orientate them in the light of the spirit so that
- f) All our thoughts, feelings and actions may perfectly express the inner divinity, our True personality.

Education to be a sadhana must begin with a radical reappraisal of the aims and values of the present system. For education is indispensable in fact. It is inescapable in life. From cradle to the grave we receive constant education. What is needed today in the field of education is not so much increased facilities or sophisticated equipment, but a new vision of education. In order to make studies a means of sadhana, we must have the guiding principles of the new outlook for revaluating today's educational principles, psychological understanding and goals in terms of obvious and practical aim of education. It has to lay emphasis on values, a need for a new synthesis of the aims of the ancient and modern systems of education in a higher reconciling vision of life.

The obvious and practical aim of education is Self-Knowledge and Self-mastery. To recall the famous maxim of the ancient Delphic oracle—"know thyself" – is one of the recognized purposes of the ancient systems of education. The new vision of education has to harmonize this ancient aim of self-knowledge with the modern aim of world knowledge. The knowledge of the Self is the road of self-mastery. It is only knowing thyself one has sure and secure basis for the mastery of the outer environment. The modern understanding and goals of education are in terms of external world and nature. Its exaggerated stress on knowledge of the environment, social adaption, development of skills, on preparation for a career and life of a good citizen are legitimate aims. The crucial question

is: whether these aims are conterminous with the higher aims of life. Because, as the Mother points out, "on the quality of your aim will depend the quality of your life." Again, the emphasis on "values" is badly missing in our modern education. Study of the life and history of individuals and civilizations, lays before us the truth that not skills but values are the intangible guiding forces of evolution. What is the source and fount of the deepest and highest values in man? Is it the mind, or his emotional being or his ethical being or the spirit within him? Is not the consciousness of the spirit the source of the higher values like truth, beauty, goodness and love? How without the experience of the spirit, these values can become living realities and acquire the highest power for self-transformation?

The need of the hour is that education should to be creatively oriented, laying emphasis on awakening and enlightened sensitivity to the higher values of life. The mechanical adaptation to social machinery dampens the creative potentialities of the instruments of human consciousness, and renders it difficult to learn the art and science of creative living. What value is this academic education if it does not build our character, train mind, organize the intellect, and develop power of thought that gives self-mastery and manifests "perfection already in man?" The men of sense are beginning to feel that literary education is of no good, scholarship in vain, if it lacks the idea, will and aspiration to make education of a Nation the sadhana of life to shape and bring out the divine in man, the real person. We judge education by a standard: if it acknowledges the mind to be a living thing; stimulates it to give out more in quality and quantity than is imparted to it from outside. For:

"Deep in us a forgotten kinship points
And a faint voice of ecstasy and prayer
Calls to those lucent lost immensities."⁶

The value of academic education lies in its preparing at best the outer man or the man of society. This outer aspect is a part of the whole being—economic, intellectual, aesthetic, social and spiritual. The aim of education as a mode of Sadhana is to train and tame mind, life and body, awaken in man the consciousness that of all terrestrial things, he is the most valuable asset. It is with his collaboration he can hasten the pace of evolution, help Nature to materialize the dream that she has been toiling

for ages to express. After millions of years of toil, labour and struggle, Nature evolved man out of the animal laboratory who can think and aspire to be more than man—a superman. Education to be a mode of sadhana of collaboration with the plan of Nature is to accelerate the process of evolution for the habitation of superior types of beings who shall surpass man in the manner as man excels animals. For:

"This bodily appearance is not all;
The form deceives; the person is a mask;
Hid deep in man celestial powers can dwell.
His fragile ship conveys through the sea of years
An incognito of the Imperishable."

The global air is charged with many shining and revolutionary ideas on future education. It is a search not merely for a type of education that caters to the material, economic, technological, social and cultural needs of the growing world family but much more to meet the psychological and spiritual needs of the future Man. So the education has to integrate the educational needs of the present society with the material, economic, technological, social and cultural needs of the future society. Terms like, "learning society" or "de-schooling society" are highly suggestive of the new thinking on the future education. The type of education needs to realize man's evolutionary destiny. Its aim is not merely to create a smarter, rationalized and adaptable social being, revolving in a large circle in the merry-go-round of his limited and stumbling mental consciousness. In the futuristic visions of secular thinkers there is lot of mist and a few glistening dewdrops that evaporate as soon as the truth-light radiates. What is missing in these revolutionary thinkers is a "clear insight into the evolutionary predicament of modern man, the higher aims of terrestrial evolution, and the role of education in realising these aims."⁸ There is lot of vagueness in their thought as far as the higher aims of terrestrial evolution are concerned and the role of education in realising these aims. The future vision of Education as a mode of sadhana is a paradigm of the theory, and practice of the spiritual evolution of Man and the planet Earth.

The divine-man-making education of the Future aims at creating a new Man that fulfils mind and reason by transcending them by his living in

a higher dimension of consciousness that alone can lead humanity and earth towards their evolutionary fulfilment. The commanding words of Gita for the seekers are to exceed: "sabda brama ativartate," because the word that does not kindle power is a "static knowledge" as M.P. Pandit observes. Because, "the knowledge too has to grow and the old sastra has to yield place to the new."⁹ Man at this transitional period is a living laboratory of Nature preparing humanity for an evolutionary leap. The rationalized mental consciousness is not the last summit of human evolution; therefore Educational sadhana like pilgrim's progress has to keep the pace ahead:

"And never can the mystic voyage cease,
Till the nescient dusk is lifted from man's soul.
And the morns of God have overtaken his night."¹⁰

What sort of education is to have major and prominent role to play in spearheading the higher evolution of humanity? Is it the type of education based on economics, politics, commerce, management or material science and technology or the education based on a new science and technology of consciousness? Out of the answer shall emerge the "educational technology" of the future? The tangled-organism of human life, with its diverse layers of consciousness cannot be tamed and trained in a traditional or scientific way. The new "technology" to emerge, there is to be a comprehensive understanding of the levels of consciousness and its power to use electronic, computer or information technology as instruments of consciousness. Every being lives in three dimensions. There is something of the universal in him that is closely allied with the national consciousness. Apart from the two, there is also something unique in the individual itself. The individual epitomizing the national and universal consciousness is a most important factor in the future education. It is the need of education to perfect individual to make the nation strong, united and prosperous for the sake of global life of progressive harmony and oneness. This undivided individuality is the immortal self that in us laughs and weeps, suffers the stroke.

Exults in victory, struggles for the crown,
Identified with the mind and body and life
It takes on itself their anguish and defeat.

Bleeds with fate's whips and hangs upon the cross,
 Yet is the unwounded and immortal self
 Supporting the actor in the human scene."¹¹

Education as a mode of Sadhana is a new vision of education that is constructive in its approach, assimilating all that is the best in the past; yet unlike past, it is different in its objectives and psychological approach. It is the shaping of future by bringing in a new light radically revolutionary to upset our long habit of treading the beaten paths of retreat from life's ordeals. The highest and noblest aim of life-education culminates in the perfectibility of relation between man and society, and not an escape from any illusory reality. Life, instead of being an illusion is an evolving reality. Its "ultimate aim is to be completely transformed so as to become fully developed, and effective means of the manifestation of perfection." (Sri Aurobindo's Action, p.6) The urgent need of the hour is that education should have spiritual dimensions—man's new awareness of himself and his environment. Too much importance given to material progress, to mechanical and technological manipulations, to create full employment for all, proper conditions of living with necessary-unnecessary physical comforts do not produce a real satisfaction within the minds and hearts of the people at large.

Dimensions of spiritual education are the application of inner truth and light in practical life with the contention that all the secrets are within of which the outer is only a faint projection. Educators and psychologists drawn to the inner strength and light from within are turning towards the foundation and soul of education. Their opinion being that our book learning and information, and the mental knowledge is not founded on the truth of being. It requires to be replaced by an integral system of education that looks at the whole man and the whole life. Unlike, almost exclusive mental approach of the present system, the integral education understands physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual dimensions of human personality. The present system disastrously neglects other aspects of human personality. It does not give proper place to psychic and spiritual development of children in the scheme of education, which is so much in demand today. Educational Sadhana is a process to discover this spark of God to make the way. It is

"In this investiture of fleshy life
A soul that is a spark of God servers
And sometimes it breaks through the sordid screen
And kindles a fire that makes us half divine."

— *Savitri*

Man, a fourfold being is an integral person with physical, vital, mental and spiritual personalities with their various dimensions. Education to be purposeful must aim at spiritual fulfilment on a material basis. That is probable if it integralises various personalities around their centre of gravity to be activated and reshaped anew. The fourfold educational discipline or sadhana is meant to organize body, life and mind around the spiritual center. Body to be strong and healthy needs to be educated, made receptive to the Force, supple, agile, beautiful and graceful with methodical exercises. Body, the robe of the Spirit is to be fashioned into perfect harmony and perfect beauty. The education of the vital, so much lacking in the present system aims at controlling our desires and impulses to build up a strong and noble character. Aesthetic culture, the fine arts form a part of the vital education. They awaken the aesthetic taste, the sense of beauty and harmony within us. The strong vital and physical foundation works for an enduring stability in the mental training; helping mind to scale the levels of consciousness from the higher mind, to the Intuition, the Overmind and beyond. The education of the mind in a revolutionary turn helps to accelerate the evolutionary course of the earth in its progressive growth. The education of the mind makes intellect keen and quick to organize itself, and give coherence to thoughts. Thus flourish science, philosophy, religion and culture as an outpouring of this mental principle, that can still rise higher, and delve deeper within to discover the psychic Being.

Through the element of mind the reflection dawns, concentration deepens, and mind tends towards self-discovery and self-expression. Education as a mode of sadhana brings the psychic being in front as the leader of the way; to make mind-life-body perceptive and receptive of true knowledge, inner beauty, love and harmony concealed in the silent depths of being. Basically, education of the mind is to liberate it from its world of fantasies and bring control over the feelings and their consequences. Really educated mind is silent and receptive and not closed up in his own

conception or point of view. According to the Mother, "One must make an effort to understand the other's point of view, to put oneself in his place, and instead of quarrelling or even fighting, find the solution which can reasonably satisfy both parties; there always is one for men of good will."¹²

In the educational sadhana, the mind is an instrument of knowledge, an instrument of formation, of organization and action. Not being the real Subject or the Knower, the mind is incapable of finding knowledge. The wider understanding and a deeper concentration helps mind to fall in the arms of musing Silence, and make thoughts cease to be occupied with knowings. Sri Aurobindo in his remarkable and soul provoking sentence says: "when we have passed beyond knowings, then we shall have the knowledge. Reason was the helper; Reason is the bar." Again in his "Letters on Yoga," he points out: "if the mind is too intellectually developed on certain rationalistic lines, it may hinder." Real knowledge is got through identity like reminiscence or a rediscovery. True knowledge does depend on persons, reading and writing books, and teachers that are means to an end and not an end in themselves. "Ramakrishna" Sri Aurobindo says, "Was an uneducated non-intellectual man, yet his expression of knowledge was so perfect that the biggest intellects bowed down before it." In the language of the "Katha Upanishad," "The self is not to be won by eloquent teaching, nor by brain power, nor by much learning."¹³

Education imparts transparency to the mind. It makes it delve deeper, soar higher having the capacity to look at its thought and organize life around the Ideal. Adoring itself in humility the mind serves as an instrument, to receive from above the knowledge it seeks. The Mother has set forth five kinds of capacities developed through mental education:

1. Development of power of concentration, the capacity of attention.
2. Development of capacities of expansion, wideness, complexity and richness.
3. Organization of ideas around a central idea or higher ideal or a supremely luminous idea that will serve as a guide in life.
4. Thought control, rejection of undesirable thoughts so that one may in the end, think only what one wants and when one wants.

5. Development of mental silence, perfect calm, and a more and more total receptivity of inspirations coming from the higher regions of the being.

Education of the vital is bit more arduous and persevering. To discipline the vital being is an uphill task, a long and exacting labour, requiring lot of patience and sincerity of attitude that eventually triumphs. The neglect of the vital education is the cause of the resulting reckless phenomena of our youth and its hooliganism of destruction. The indisciplined vital like an untrained horse revolts at every step, turns desperate, agitates, gets vexed, excited, passionate and impulsive. The unregenerated, unchanalised vital energy out letting through wrong channels is destructive to the extent of exhausting itself like a flickering candle flame. In dealing with the vital, we are dealing with the rebellious children, trying to purify the impulses, making them to think, and live in tune with the light of Truth that shines within them. It is the dynamic vital power, enthusiasm, and pluck of the youth that can be made to do wondrous deeds to glorify the Land in which they are born. "It is God's arrangement," says Sri Aurobindo, "that they should be the children of the past, possessors of the present, creators of the future. The past is our foundation, the present our material, the future our aim and summit"¹⁴

The education of the Body is of paramount importance. Body, the material sheath of the Spirit is the foundation upon which is build the mansion of the golden harvest. Body is an energy alike a battery that can be charged, rematerialized in a new mould. The education of the physical aims at making body docile and faithful servant, strong and supple, a fit instrument of the invigorated energy that liberates it from the tyranny of vital, and the rule of the mechanical mind. The prime purpose of the physical education is to make body immune to fatigue, exhaustion and disease. Body, the form and substance of the soul have a wonderful capacity of adaption and endurance. It can be brought under the rule of the central being and turned into spiritualized living-matter; as whatever exists, is "more or less efficient adhar of this Energy,"¹⁵ and the infinite energy pours itself into every name and form. Energy is the truth of existence. Even science bewildered in its search for the real source or origin of the mysteries of the outer world is perforce been led to believe that some secret Energy or power must be the ultimate cause and source of Nature's marvels, that:

"...Forces on the cold unthinking Void

Her adventure of life, the passionate dreams of her lust."¹⁶

The fourfold system of education is for the complete man; its vertical and horizontal approach aims at Self-Knowledge, not in isolation of world-knowledge. This experience of the individual and worldwide awareness is a restatement in terms of educational values. This gives a new character to education and a spiritual dimension founded on the basic principles of life, the fundamental truths recognized as our human heritage. Education or a mode of sadhana concerns about man, his life and purpose of living. It is the systematic development of the psycho-spiritual science of self-evolution for resolving all our problems and perplexities of life on the principle of Harmony. Education as a mode of sadhana, posits a Supreme Consciousness of the Spirit beyond mind but existing within man as his own highest and deepest Self. The highest aim of life is to realize this higher self. Accordingly, Education in its essence is spiritual, but in its method is scientific. It insists on experimental realization of this Spirit. It is the path of experimental self-discovery and the way of life regulated and disciplined according to the eternal Laws of life.

The quest of knowledge, the educational sadhana is actually the search for Truth as the goal of life. And, "the truth we seek is made up of four major aspects: Love, Knowledge, Power and Beauty." These four attributes of the Truth consummate in the fourfold perfection of man. When we reach to the "degree of perfection, which is our goal, the psychic will be a vehicle of true and pure love, the mind that of infallible knowledge, the vital will manifest an invincible power and strength and body the expression of perfect harmony and beauty."¹⁷ It is seeking all-knowledge, understanding the phenomena of existence from outside through the intellect, and simultaneously seeking to know the truth of existence from within in its source and reality by spiritual realization. In sadhana of education all knowledge ultimately is the knowledge of the workings of God through Nature and through life. Therefore, we needed personal will and effort to direct our attention on education towards inner culture. Education as sadhana culminates in the discovery of our true self, and its expression in the actual life in and through the instrumental nature. What is the worth and value of that education which does not make us to "know how to discern and discriminate, judge and see what is within and behind things."¹⁸

The present scenario is a passing phase. The pressing demand of the Time-Spirit at the present critical juncture of human destiny is the problem of education to be inextricably linked with the purpose of life and its goal. How to raise education from this low position to its highest eminent status, is a million-dollar question, and a Herculean task that only heroes can execute. The present degree-based, job-oriented system of education has reduced the education to the degrees and certificates by passing mechanical examinations. It is structured to produce a little academic product, and the system of education has no light to kindle and mitigate the loss of inner potential of the individual. "Compared to what we ought to be," said the famous Prof. William James of Harvard University, "we are only half awake" to the physical, mental and spiritual resources lying yet unused and unexplored. By itself the examination oriented education and mental training cannot change man, alter the colour of his consciousness and give him power and ability to meet life's situations. For, "the great aim of education" said Herbert Spencer, "is not knowledge but power," knowledge applied to life and lived in experience becomes power that achieves, accomplishes and liberates. This "hit or miss affair" as Norman Dòwsett observes does not meet the imperative needs of "educing the full inner potential of the individual to meet this greater demand,"¹⁹ as

"Absorbed in a routine of daily acts,

Our eyes are fixed on an external scene...

Mind keeps the soul prisoner; we are slaves to our acts

We cannot free our gaze to reach Wisdom's sun."²⁰

The problem with the existing system is that everything is overshadowed and buried under the debris of obstinate desires. The walls of narrow feelings, shallow thoughts, creepers of greed and selfishness baulk the flowing of the stream out of the rock of centuries Inconscience. To Srinivasa Iyenger, "The greyish wall, the Mother saw—the wall of tamsic solidity, the wall of Rajasic resistance, the wall of persisting ignorance—indeed this wall is everywhere and blocks all genuine movements for reform." The system vitiated by a vicious principle of teaching by snippets reflects a "discursive lightness and fickle mutability of the average human mind,"²¹ spoiled and complicated further

by the parental ambitions, crazy, indifferent and thoughtless behaviour of motivated teachers. This has adverse impact on innocent students and budding children, forcing them to be the victims of "pettifogging calculations and schizophrenic self-torturings."²² Added to this, the prevailing political pollution, social corruption renders the situation hazardous and catastrophic. We find the youth lured away by the "super bazaar of extravagance and waste and lose the way in the by lanes of entertainment and abuse." Ironically speaking, our super-civilized methods of education are so successful in R.D. Laing's words that "by the time the new human being is fifteen or so, we are left with a being like ourselves. A half-crazed creature, more or less adjusted to a new world. This is normality in our parentage."²³

The system of education, British in form and essence—rooted in the philosophy of the Enlightenment is nurtured by the intellectual liberalism of the 18th century Europe. Being antithetical to the line of our evolving cultural history it goes contrary to the nature, and psychology of the Indian mental, aesthetic and psychic temperament. Consequently, its effect is "denationalizing, degrading and improvising to the national mind, soul and character."²⁴ The Intellectual Liberalism saturated through and through in European temperament stands for science, spirit of enquiry, intellect, humanism or things human that could never be grasped in their totality without understanding things divine for as Shelly puts it, "All things by law divine in one another's mingle." How "without the recognition of such a spiritual center," writes Dr. Radhakrishnan, "which will help us to coordinate the variety of unlike elements of which human nature consists our life will have no integrity."²⁵ The predominant emphasis in the Intellectual Liberalism is on success, cultivation of circumstance, utility and usefulness. "In a society in which all" writes Helmut Lindemann in his lecture on, "Leadership in Education," "or at least the majority are permanently engaged in this bitter struggle for success, friction is bound to develop, leading ultimately to the destruction of the social machine;" unless there is some lubrication to oil the machine. Education is not to live in this sorry scheme of life and make this world a vale of tears, but to think with the feeling heart and see the world with "cheerful equanimity." Then we shall know what Pascal meant when he said, "the heart has its reasons, which reason does not know."

The system, to borrow Plato's phrase is an "imitation of imitation." It is wrapped in its mortal poverty to be weighed down by its heavy weight of shortcomings and betraying ignorance. Its two serious defects are: its being mainly literary and its being indifferent, and badly neglecting the national character, a tradition of values for the initiation of students to cope with the complexities of life, and lay open the mystery that is Man. Moreover, its imposition of graded information of a fixed syllabus is a methodology bereft of power to impart physical dynamism to life-energies, train thought, emotion and imagination to "open to great inspirations and enthuse the heart of youth with the mighty heart-stirring ideas,"²⁶ that move men and societies for a leap into the new future. In our imitation of the foreign political and educational system in form and spirit we have not been able to improve the quality of life. It is from bad to worse situation, because to be simple in outer life is to be truthful, candid and open and rich and exalted in inner life. It involves years of education, long training and a spirit of sacrifice. Socrates tells us, the noblest of all investigations is the study of what man should be and what he should pursue. Education to be a mode of sadhana is always, to quote the thought invigorating words of Prof. Rama Tirtha:

"Pushing, marching, labour and no more stagnant indolence,
Enjoyment of work as against tedious drudgery,
Peace of mind and no canker of suspicion,
Organisation and no disaggregation."

Life-education is an assimilation of ideas that pass into character. It is virtually sadhana of the divine man in making. It is not an imitation of the past or the present but:

"The logic of Events as against the Authority of departed authors,
Living Realisation and no more dead quotations."

The foresight of Sri Aurobindo is that "the acceptance of Western system of education to be almost suicidal"²⁷ if we imitate it under the pretext of pseudo-democratic values conditioned by the industrial culture. Apprehending the receding movement of the present civilization, the Master uttered the following words of prophetic import: "The scientific, rationalistic, industrial, pseudo-democratic civilization of the West is now in process of dissolution and it would be lunatic absurdity to us at this

moment to build blindly on that sinking foundation."²⁸ At its best, the uncertain and tardy working of the reasoning intellect can produce lean and grave scholars, cunning and cautious politicians, scientists with a mechanized mind devoid of the sense of beauty, wonder, truth and goodness. It "does not create the hero and originator, the inspired prophet, the mighty builder, the maker of nations; it does not conquer nature and destiny, lay its hand on the future, command the world."²⁹ Accordingly, the form and spirit of the prevailing system of education is obviously "merge in quality" and totally "vicious in method." Under the overshadowing foreign influence, the linking of learning with economic satisfaction and commercial opulence has reduced education to mere collection of information by turning students cramming machines with limited memory of fleeting effect. The crammed-stuff instead of making them better runs riot, undigested all their lives.

Notwithstanding the fact, that our universities and educational institutions have lost that "compelling power of inspiration" which is the reason de etre of the leadership in education. Having lost the ancient "inevitable gift of thinking with heart," they are bereft of foresight, courage and insight to research or rediscover the principle of true teaching reapplied to modern environment. It is not possible to rest in unresolved discard. The "noor" or "illim" i.e. the light of knowledge ought to give us the taste of "excellence" in whatever we learn. The purpose of all sciences or sastras," is "ttava darshanam" i.e. an insight into the Truth. All study ought to give us an encounter with Reality. Through science, we get a faint glimpse of the infinite intelligence and will working in the material universe. The psychic sciences develop our subtle sense and mind to give us a peep into subtler phenomena of the world behind the physical workings. These things help in the growth proportionately as we learn to use them and exceed them. In the sadhana of Education they are used to teach man his individuality, and to assert in the end its divine freedom. For nothing can cut him rigorously into a perfect pattern. "Always he is," writes Samar Basu, "the traveller of the cycles and his road is forward."³⁰

Education a mode of sadhana is an offering of all-knowledge to the source from which all emanates. The conflict in good and evil disappears as soon as the Ethics is seen a rhythmic movement of psychic energy flowing outwards in forms that are good to be beautiful. The present teaching

of the three "R's" feeding the mind with facts in different subjects narrows the aim of education with the limited objectives. Education lacking in depth, and superior outlook cannot endow students with virtues that are the real values of existence. In spite of the increased knowledge of nature, the spectacular achievements of science, the life of humanity is fragmented, divided and groaning under pain and helplessness. People live in insecurity, uncertainty, depression, fear and frustration. This "disproportion," writes Dr. Radhakrishnan, "between the growth of wisdom and the increase of knowledge" is "due to neglect of the spiritual side, due to the neglect of human beings who are concentrating themselves on the externals of life, little realising that these externals are to be employed for the purpose of promoting human wisdom."³¹ There is a vast difference between wisdom and information stuffed in our minds to turn us "hollow man" with "hollow heads." "Vidya or knowledge lights the light of 'viveka,' a sense of what is right and supreme good to aspire and realize. A small dialogue of the Upanishad illustrates the point. A question is raised; what constitutes the essence of good life? Immediately a thunderclap sounds 'da da da' suggestive of the marks of a human being. These are self-control, self-sacrifice and forgiveness. Without these virtues to endow with, we are only human animals, 'nara pasu' and not more. How can anything great be achieved without pain and sacrifice? "This whole country—India," writes Dr. Radhakrishnan, "is built on austerity, on renunciation, not on what one acquires but what one gives up. Even nations become great not by what they acquire but by what they surrender."³²

The dream of higher life is the pursuit of education that is the greatest gift of all cultures. Education is an art of coordinating various parts of the being and their development around the true center of each person with an understanding that the head and heart are the two arcs of life's circle. In the education of a child these parts are inextricably linked together in the functioning and growth of the being. Head and heart instead of being antithetical, work in coordination to arrive at an integration of the intellect by intellectualizing emotion and heart to emotionalize intellect. All human beings apart from their external social conditions are same, and hold the same values while the spirit of the age with its fast changing global scenario, demands a new outlook on education on the lines of evolutionary impetus of the soul evolving individually and collectively. It is by harnessing the permanent gains of

the past that education has to regulate the present for the possibilities of an unfolding future. It cannot be otherwise for "within the universal mind and soul of humanity" as Sri Aurobindo observes there "is the mind and the soul of the individual with its infinite variations, its commonness and its uniqueness, and between them there stands an intermediate power, the mind of the nation, the soul of the people. All of these three education must take account."³³

Education that chisels the individual in a new mould is an art of 'drawing out' all that maketh a man who has learnt to interact with society, share its responsibilities and prepare himself to uphold and realize the ideals for which the nation stands. As the traits of the national character are embedded in the aims of education so the soul of the nation demands the fulfilment of its cherished ideals. In spite of some setbacks, the periods of stagnation, the stream of the National education has its source in the perennial glaciers of Knowledge—Truth—Bliss that are ever the same, yet ever experimenting and utilizing the forms of the present for creating the dazzling noons of the future. National system of education with its universal outlook is a process that leads to the emergence of global sense in man. Education the religion of humanity is based on the truth of universality of man, oneness of life and unity of race. Education, cumulative growth of the soul of India, cannot afford to be a dogmatic copy of the past as its nature is to accept noble and good from every direction, assimilate the best of the west on the truth of its national character.

Education to be holistic is not imparting knowledge but training of various faculties to tap virtues innate in man and organize them in life. By neglecting the psychology of the race we cannot build up the edifice of thought and knowledge. This neglect has weakened, made inert the body and mind of the nation. By the National system of education, we do not mean a stark imitation of the past, rejecting what is enduring in the West. It is to be flexible according to the growing needs of the complex youth. As difference is the law of Nature; so education has to reckon with variety and variation to account for this difference in the working of human beings. The education of a child cannot follow any flat rule. So Education is to be "child-oriented" and not teacher-centered. It must replace the barbarous ideas of hammering the child into fixed moulds by the new positive and liberated ideas emerging in the field of child

education. "The development and formation," says Fridrich Forebel "of the whole future life of each being is contained in the beginning of its existence."³⁴ Man as a child appears a fresh blossom, and as such it proclaims the ceaseless appearance of new human life. The integral approach to child education which have deep roots in the expanding life of today, requires a new psychology and a new vision of child and man in terms of the spiritual dimension wherein lie the secret of true harmony and integration. One of the major inadequacies of modern thought is lack of sufficient psychological knowledge and understanding of the spiritual dimension of man. Without this knowledge and understanding education cannot be holistic for the whole man and the whole life.

In fact education of the child must begin even before his birth. The education starts the moment the child is conceived by the parents and grows in the womb of the mother. The most prominent instance is that of Abyamanu, whose education began the moment he was conceived by Subdhara. Even before birth, the cultivated parents can think of the seeds that they want to flower in the garden of the family for their happiness and for the good of the society. Once the fruitful and energetic seeds are sown; they continue to be cultivated, pruned and trimmed through the various stages of life. The process of education starts before the birth; it continues throughout life; progressing from the prenatal stage, in the fresh air of school in an atmosphere of freedom, joy, understanding and love. The "free progress method," the play school of perfect freedom is a prime requisite for true progress and a spontaneous inner growth and development. As family is a cradle of civic virtue, the role of parents as prime teachers of the child is a founding stone of man's life. The parents cannot afford to be irresponsible and reckless in habits to set bad examples for sensitive children to emulate. A decent home is the best school, honest and disciplined parents, the best teachers to teach through their acts and behaviour. To reform others means to reform ourselves first and to educate a child one has to educate oneself first. Values like truth, courage, honesty, self-giving, respect for life cannot be inculcated by classroom instruction. Self-control, sincerity, disinterestedness, peace, etc are "taught infinitely better by example than by beautiful speeches."³⁵ If the precept is not supported by an example, it breeds only cynicism and hypocrisy. Therefore, it is said that example is better than precept.

In the child-oriented education teacher's role is to make studies means of sadhana to command respect by upholding and applying the principle of true teaching. In this educational endeavour the training of the teacher is of primary importance. Nothing great is achieved without sacrifice. In tune with the dharma of the country, the teacher has to throw ego and desire into the Flame. By eliminating egoism he is capable of making inner progress of impersonalisation and of clear-sightedness. Instead of exploiting students, playing with their career, commercializing knowledge, turning learning to further his ambitions, he ought to come out of narrow grooves of religion, caste, community; enter into the temple of learning as the worshipper of the Mother Wisdom, and make worship the law of his life. The problem of manifesting the higher nature of the child through different studies is a task light and easy, if the teacher with the spirit of love involves himself in the interest of students and creates confidence in them. The Mother saw into the future and said that the time demands the teacher "ought to be a yogic," with a magnetic power of divine inspiration emanating through his character and behaviour, speech and silence. Such teachers with a compelling power of love, knowledge, truth and beauty; thrill and inspire, exhort and motivate, mould and change the colour of the consciousness of those who come close to their aura.

Education is a second birth. Doubtless a teacher is born in a particular caste and religion; but after his commitment to knowledge and tasting the illuminating wine of wisdom, he is born anew. The pursuit of knowledge, the search for Truth and worship of Beauty is his religion. In the study of the child's mind, the teacher has to understand that each child is an exceptional case to be dealt with in a special way "in accordance with an unconsciously formed but ever present goal—a vision of greatness, perfection and superiority."³⁶ The psychological technique that the teacher uses differently with different children, has its purpose to invigorate the power of the thinking, so that child's latent gift of enquiry is stimulated, his aptitude to investigate and analyse get proper and natural outlet of his insatiate intellectual curiosity; turn for metaphysical enquiry, the gift of imagination. In his role of an awakener, a friend and guide the teacher is not teaching as much as helping the pupil to teach himself and discover the knowledge within through the help of books and teachers. Sri Aurobindo, writing on education says: "The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught." The

student has to "know himself." The teacher and the books, temples and symbols, suggest, stimulate and educe that greater potential lying dormant within every human being. "To know Thyself" in the words of Norman C. Dowselt, "is no longer an esoteric philosophy of the ancient Greeks or a revelation of Vedic India, but a realized truth of modern man."³⁷ The experience of the Self implies self-effort, self-examination, self-scrutiny, towards which the teacher can goad, motivate, spur and activate the student to embark on the adventure. Teacher's work as a helper, a guide—not a instructor or a hard taskmaster—is to make the child think and be conscious of his own Self and latent potentialities that he can tap and explore. If the teacher thinks big, he can induce this magic of thinking big in his students. As such the new outlook on education demands teacher should change himself, improve the quality of his mind and heart with the power of thought; developing higher capacities of discipline, self-control, consecration, psychological understanding and "infectious enthusiasm." After reforming oneself it is possible to reform others, awaken in students; the will to know, need for progress through self-discipline and self-dedication.

The teacher's comprehension of the truth is that in the scheme of Nature, variety and variation makes each child a unique case to be dealt with exceptionally according to his "swabhava," inner nature or aptitude of each budding flower. Keeping in view the difference of thought and expression the teacher, in order to lift them up, has to stoop down to the level of each student to guide each according to his being below-average, average, above-average, good, better, the best. The students whose creative potential is dampened and predominant by the principle of Tamas suffer from mental inertia, slowness and forgetfulness. Their unwillingness to change is due to the heavy weight of ignorance that makes them wallow in the pond of slough, dullness to be strongly disinclined to study. There are other students who fall in the category of those who are restless, excited and full of passion and activity. They are Rajasic by nature they cannot help venting their hooliganism to the pitch of destruction that we are compelled to maintain police force to keep the brute down. Their indisciplined life of reckless activity, obscured by the smoke of passionate desires, the mud of political improvisation, predilections, wrong ideas turn institutions into breeding places of evil, obstruct the pursuit of knowledge to make null and void the principles

of education. Our hope—in this sorry schemes of politically dominated educational system—is hinged upon a few teachers and students of Sattavic nature who have comprehensiveness, a kind of illumination and flaming aspiration to make study a means of sadhana, a stairway of surprise to climb after knowledge infinite. Here comes the teacher's yogic role of inwardly helping his student-disciples by his own example and through his own spiritual influence. It is only when it takes its role seriously, tries to fill it as honestly as possible, playing his part a little more truly than an ordinary man. Knowing that, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."³⁸

The present period of transition has put mankind on trail. As all transitions belong to the realms of tragedy that like phoenix birth out of the ruins of the past verge towards a new creation. The new Light breaks upon the earth, a new Truth takes birth, and the "sun-eyed children of a marvelous dawn" are to be born as "The architects of immortality." It is time for teachers and students to introspect, understand and see what they are doing; towards which direction they are moving; to what end they are serving and leading their lives and society! The sadhana of education can revolutionise our thinking, bring radical changes in consciousness, alter the colour of thinking to create the new world of harmony and freedom free from fear, suspicion and narrow-minded loyalties of all kinds. Education, as a mode of sadhana is a process of self-exceeding by using all knowledge and the present situation as a "spring-board" towards an advancing future—man becoming more than man, a god-man or the Superman. To be really educated, is to be untainted by religious fanaticism and political treachery. The student-sadakh has also to be a flaming sword of knowledge, drawn in a battle against the forces of Falsehood. His is no fight against any creed or religion or any forms of government or social class or nation or civilization. The flaming sword of knowledge is drawn to fight against division, unconsciousness, ignorance and falsehood. "We are endeavouring," as the Mother says, "to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, truth; and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth, and Love."³⁹ Therefore, the teacher "will follow as far as he may the method of the Teacher within us. He will lead the disciple through the nature of the disciple. Teaching, example, influence—these are the three instruments of the Guru."⁴⁰

The "new creation" to flower is a task for the student-sadhaks to materialise by making education a mode of sadhana and all life a yoga. In our use of the word 'sadhana', there is nothing esoteric or exotic to the edge of obscurity. It is not meant for a few, who want to escape from the suffering by paying deaf ear to the "still sad music of humanity," and by turning from the world to live in a passive meditation for personal salvation. Sadhana is not so simple a teaching that the popular ear assimilates it to the already familiar sounds. The old forms and methods of personal salvation of escape into 'nirvana,' in which all is extinct, are no longer sufficient for the purpose of the Time-Spirit. Sadhana to us is a psychological and scientific approach to the problems of existence and governance of life, body and mind. Sadhana, rooted in the consciousness of the Being, is an art of making worship the law of life, living in the world by preserving the sweetness of inner silence while enjoying freedom in the bonds of creation.

Sadhana is a process of self-discipline, self-development, constant endeavour to discover the true self. In the discovery of the Self the falsity of ego is dissolved and the sun of knowledge shines in the vastness of the inner sky. When the ego bursts its bonds, it stretches into infinity, the foundation for higher knowledge is laid down, and we move towards the highest, the Brahnavidiya. And "to be a good teacher," the Mother says, "One has to abolish in oneself all egoism."⁴¹ This is the very basic step in entering into the Sadhana of Education. Education as a mode of sadhana uses the mental knowledge as an incentive, an indirect help to the knowledge not acquired by the analytical intellect of the scientist and the philosopher, which is at best the learned ignorance. If Philosophy, in its dealing with the principles of things is lost in abstractions and does not make us perceive the Principle of all these principles, then it falls in the category of uncertainty and is at best a mental gymnastic. The study of all subjects must take us to that knowledge knowing which one knows everything—the Divine Consciousness—Puissance in man and creatures and things and forces whose thought and will is being worked out through cosmic and human evolution. It is to this discovery to which education leads and educes. All knowledge is a coiled energy, inner, hidden, latent and potential secret within every human being, which is yet to evolve to its full stature. To quote the Mother, "what strikes you in a book is what you have already experienced deep within... The knowledge that seems to come to you from outside is only an occasion

for bringing out the knowledge that is within you." Sadhana is a method, a way to accelerate process of conscious evolution culminating in a higher type of study, which transcends all formal limits and gives awareness of That knowing which one knows everything.

Education as a mode of sadhana makes studies a means of reaching one's soul and higher realities. While in themselves studies have little spiritual value. The mental growth and acquisition of knowledge is of relative value if they do not help to see oneself detachedly and control the mind and the vital. The educational sadhana helps us to conduct studies in right spirit and right manner. In sadhana, the inner and the outer are fused together and "it is in each and every moment of daily life that the Truth must be found and practiced."⁴² Knowledge to which studies are means makes for our liberation from all physical, vital or mental preferences and prejudices. That is why it is so important to study. But for those exceptional student-sadhaks it is to study in a spirit of total self-consecration and offering. Sadhana means to make studies a sacrifice, an opportunity to open to communicate with the Divine. In reality existence is a sacrifice and everything in it, all our acts and studies too fall into the same pattern. In sacrifice, reading and mental development are subordinate things to the mounting flame of knowledge in which mind, heart, vital demands and physical desires are burnt to liberate them to develop into divine nature. Thus, purified and made transparent in the flame of Sacrifice these parts are made to grow into the divine nature. Teaching and learning, reading and writing, working and meditating are parts of self-realisation and world-knowledge. It is churning the butter of the mind, taming the vital-horse to harness its energy for energising the physical consciousness. The noble profession of learning and teaching the work of a teacher is according to the Mother, "the best and quickest way of doing his yoga," the Grand Trunk Road to tread and for the teacher to realize that "every difficulty and every difficult student is an opportunity for him to find a divine solution to the problem."⁴³

The studies that passes into character and maketh a man, is the assimilation of ideas in life that move the world. "The pen is mightier than sword." The Mother says, "Certain ideas have the power to transform the world. It is these ideas that ought to be expressed; they are the guiding stars in the firmament of the spirit, it is they that lead the earth towards her supreme realization." To read such books that

'maketh a man' means to refrain from indiscriminate reading. As all we do or read or think leave impressions behind to be recorded in the subconscious as the seeds we sow for the harvest to make or harm our character, personality and sadhana. Everything we read, imagine or believe chisels our personality, shapes our destiny. The ugly, debasing or erotic impressions have an adverse effect. They become difficult, obstinate, adverse entities to fight and purify. The first best trash has a degrading influence. It washes away whatever gain is achieved by long and laborious efforts. Study of books make or mar our sadhana of education. In pointing out the poisonous effect of undesirable books on the subconscious mind, the Mother has said; "Each time you read a book in which the consciousness is very low, it strengthens your subconscience and inconscience; it prevents your consciousness from rising upward. It is as if you poured buckets of dirty water on the efforts you have made to purify your subconscious."44

The student Sadhaks, to whom Education is a mode of Sadhana select the reading very carefully, choosing the books according to need and aspiration. Study of books has positive or negative impact on our sadhana. One has to be particular about the kind of books and subjects detrimental to one's sadhana. The studies of the books that can make our intellect clear, pure and disciplined are helpful in laying a "wide and sure foundation for the highest divine knowledge." Sri Aurobindo's directions in this respect are clear. "To read what will help the yoga or what will be useful for the work or what will develop the capacities for the divine purpose. Not to read worthless stuff or for mere entertainment or for a dilettante intellectual curiosity which is of the nature of a mental dram drinking. When one is established in the highest consciousness, one can read nothing or everything; it makes no difference."45

Education: a mode of sadhana i.e. the worship made the law of life is a method of "drawing out," a way of widening the circumference of consciousness towards unending progress in which nothing is excluded as "all life is yoga" and every act an offering in the Flame. The process of "drawing out" is a method, a way, and a technology of consciousness to awaken the sleeping energy, the infinite Intelligence that like a coiled mighty spring can leap to the highest. Without awakening this coiled energy, the highest goal of education cannot be achieved. It is because, the Shakti; the Mother of unthinkable energy is at the heart of creation,

which otherwise is an aimless fall and our escape, the sole release is justified. In that case, there would be no evolution; a steady "manifestation of perfection already in man," and this mechanical blind universe would be a freak of some inconscient brute force. The sadhana of self-education and life-education culminates in the consummation of the goal of the earth's evolution by "drawing out" the coiled energy to workout and perfect the meaning of soul's birth by spiritualising the already mentalised-living matter and also:

"A spell to bring the Immortal's bliss on earth,
To mate with heaven's truth our mortal thought,
To lift earth's hearts nearer the Eternal's sun."

—Savitri

In order to materialize this dream, there ought to be the birth of the "Academy of the Future," a Life Institution, the kind of a center of education for the future children to be cultivated to know themselves and be the master of their mind and senses. It is they who shall demonstrate the highest philosophy to become the leaders and workers for community service, national life and international co-existence. As a generating source of power, the Institution has to be spontaneously gravitating like the earth around the Sun of suns; the presence of the Mother as without That power and knowledge nothing substantial can be done and achieved. Knowledge for Liberation is not to achieve the "Zero sign," the nothingness of the world and existence by destroying the mind and senses, making naught of the earth's desire for fulfilment. Unlike this negative knowledge, the knowledge of the awakened Shakti is a force in operation that constructs, perfects, transforms and fulfils the manifestation of Matter-Life-Mind complex according to the evolutionary impetus of the growing soul. Therefore, the aim of the integral education is to awaken the sleeping power that alone can spur on to action the "trance bound soul," and with its collaboration liberate body, vital and mind from their limitations to make them also breathe in the freedom of immortality. For in the words of the Master, "There is no mortality. It is only the Immortal who can die; the mortal could neither be born nor perish" and

"To live, to love, are signs of infinite things,
Love is a glory form eternity's spheres."

The keynote of the yoga of education is the secret of drawing "the Mother of all strengths" for accelerating the ordered march of the soul towards union and unending progress. The Shakti latent in us is the Shakti outside embodied as the Mother India, the "undivided infinite of things" called Aditi, the origin of all Godheads and Powers. It is the supreme Light and infinite consciousness, symbolically described as the "shining cow" and our ancient prayer; the flaming aspiration goes forever as revealed in the Veda, and rediscovered by Sri Aurobindo in his 'The Secret of Veda.'

"O Mother of powers divine, of earth's,
Life-energies, the mark and goal of sacrificial works, may you shine
forth resplendent and bestow reward on us. O supreme Mother,
much adored, enrich us with thy wealth of light."

Mother we adore shall be the purport of the next chapter; wherein we shall bathe in the magic-mystery of the Mother-principle, so deeply pervading the mental, emotional and spiritual landscape of the Indian life that we can do nothing without Mother's consciousness and force. Even the supreme Shiva bereft of Shakti is a lifeless corpse impotent to do anything. The sublimity of the word 'Maa' is itself enough to generate power; enthrall us with a vision of beauty, transport heart with the music that works alchemy in the unregenerate lives. That we shall adore next. For that to happen we have to educate ourselves. We are what education has made of us and not what education could make of us. We are what we imagine and think to be and we shall be what our education shall make of us, for education fashions us exactly as we fashion it. The children of the immortal Bliss are the sons and daughters of Mother India. It is for her sake they have to be great innovators, teachers, scientists, doctors, engineers, leaders, artists, dancers, musicians, technicians, etc. The most important thing to remember is that all progress, wealth and prosperity are not for a single individual party or community, but for the greatness and love of the Mother in the form of humanity and Nature. Here, we are reminded of Sri Aurobindo's farewell address to the students before starting public political activity. In a highly inspiring tone he said:

"...I hope to see some of you become great, great not for your own sake but for your country, to make your country great. I hope to see some of you become rich, rich not for yourself but to make your country rich, that is the ideal, one must work in view of the welfare of all, a global-well being. The goal is not one's own little Self, but the Great Self in all."

In our concluding remark there is nothing mystic or religious when it is avowed that Energy (Shakti) energizes itself and educational mode of sadhana is a kindling of tapa-shakti. It is made possible with our unconditional surrender to the Mother wisdom, for she alone can press perfection on life's stumbling powers, and make dumb matter conscious of its God. If education is to be the divine man in making, then it is to be the growth and expansion of the Omnipotent in this house of flesh. We have to reverse the gear by rejecting the falsehood of reducing knowledge to information, commercializing education, politicizing institutions and exploiting students in money-bank elections. Education of drawing out is a psychology with the soul that makes for the realization that all power is within, the source of all-knowledge and all-joy that envelope our being are within. This inner worth and intrinsic enjoyability is not to be confused with literary and social status. The aim of education for the Mother is to "prepare her children for the rejection of falsehood and the manifestation of Truth."⁴⁶ Only the political and economic obstacles come in the way of universalization of knowledge and intellectual activity in human race by dividing the country in parties, religious sects and communities. These cannot prevail upon long as the truth always triumphs. The heart thrilling words of the Master assure us that "the light which led us to freedom, though not yet unity, still burns and will burn till it conquers."⁴⁷ The burning faith of the student-sadhaks, the teachers who have made education a mode of sadhana shall continue their march courageously, looking neither to right nor left but straight towards the goal ever heedful of the Mother's warning. "It is dangerous to linger on the way." India like the magical word Hindu is comprised of five letters epitomizing the universe and its creative purpose: 'I' standing for the 'Infinite, operating through the executive power of Nature to Divinise, I—individual and A—all. In this vision is concealed the flaming voice of the secret soul in humanity. India has not "spoken her last creative word."⁴⁸ Dear sons and daughter of Mother India, our dreaming big is not only magical but carries with it an inexhaustible power that shall take us out of this void, and make improbable probable because;

"The impossible God's sign of things to be."⁴⁹

And:

Today's impossible for the future's base.⁵⁰

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Chapter - IV

THE MOTHER WE ADORE

In the previous chapters we saw the word Hindu is an attitude of the mental man called Manu, the thinking being towards life and nature, the perception of his destiny hidden in the evolutionary nissus and in the movement and expression that we call life. Such nature and destiny comes to home to every man's business and bosom. Man, a creature of wants is an epitome of humanity. He is at the same time, a transitional being; a living laboratory of Nature, in which she prepares his divine manhood. The "god in ruins" of Emerson, has his soul imprisoned in the inconscience of material Nature that narrows his consciousness to the ignorance of the mind groping in darkness for identity. Humanity groaning in misery is walled within the hackneyed national ideologies and is panting for freedom. All transitions belong to the realms of tragedy, the period of the churning of Energy, justifying the destiny of mankind issuing out of the character compelling each to swallow the poison that has been churned before any new beginning is to be made. Man, the crown of creation is not the final word of the supreme Creative Power. He has to become more than a man, the superman, evolve into a divine manhood, widen into universal consciousness and soar into the transcendental realms. All this is implied in the suggestive indefiniteness of the word Hindu; the five-lettered word, recalling the ancient flames of Agni to be kindled for the transformation of the body of five elements into five perfections of man.

We saw education a mode of sadhana is a five-fold discipline of physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual personalities and the cultivation of all the parts of man. The aim is not to suppress and annihilate these parts. Entering into Nirvana and escape from life's ordeals is to give up the task in defeat and leave the mystery unresolved. The Existence cannot be an aimless fall, so our escape from it cannot be true freedom or release in the sense, the body, life and mind be also liberated and spiritualized.

The aim is transformation of the elementary being, vital and mental consciousness of man into divine consciousness of the spiritualized personality. There is heroic in the conquest of ego to enthrone in its place the soul-person, the dynamic conscious Force of the Supreme, flowing in a ceaseless Action untainted by ego and desire. To a discerning eye, the Hindu is the formula of the universe, the way of life and the reality of evolving existence. It is a movement of Energy, mysteriously conducting her play among galaxies and at the same time involved in the conduct of the earth's evolution. She is always same, yet new at every moment that our intellects are baffled to get any clue of her mysterious working. With all mysteriousness, there is nothing accidental and whimsical in the operation Energy. Energy building up of Matter is not the "fantasy-builder,"

"Her play is real; a Mystery he fulfils:

There is a plan in the Mother's deep world-whim,

A purpose in her vast and random game."

In the experience of Shakti, Hindu touches the bedrock of the universe, the fundamental truth of existence—how or why the universe happened or things in the universe. Nothing can be by chance. Something must come out of something, as Nothingness or nihil is not nothing but pregnant with something that evolves or is impetus to evolution. Not chance but "a selection, mysterious to us, out of infinite possibility has caused this universe" is an inference of sensible persons. The existence cannot be a freak of an inconsequential matter with no essential significance.

Creation is a creation of Energy, its dynamic dance of waves that coalesce and materialize into particles and atoms to be called Matter. This automatic necessity of Energy is not "the hard curve of a blind Necessity"² that impels the Force-rhythm to coalesce into waves forming atoms which steadily evolve into this "self-organizing chance" we call our material world of all lives, minds, souls which live and move. The whole formula of the material universe is epitomized by the word Hindu. As the Action of Energy or Shakti that produces forms, engenders multitude of active relations, a ceaseless activity or Karma and the result of that long persistent movement of Energy. Matter, the form of Energy is subtler than our discovery of electricity, light, the electron and photon.

The Sankhya philosopher terms it an original indiscriminate Matter, the first state of manifestation of Prakriti, the eternal Energy. According to Sri Aurobindo this is "subtler Matter, not formed but motional, vibratory, aetheric i.e. subtler motion of Energy, a vibration of Energy in space."³ Space, too in the game of Shakti is not a mere conception of mind and sense but "an extension of an unseizable Infinite that exceeds the grasp of our mind and sense."⁴

The Energy that creates motion and action in an expanding scale is an evolution out of itself as the "formula of our universe"—the action and its results. Energy that seems unconscious prakriti is not energy of deceptive consciousness of Maya. The results of Energy in constant motion are evident and clear. Having laboured innumerable millions of years she created flaming suns and systems. Then stooping downwards, took plunge into the inconscience of Matter, made the earth habitable by stirring vibrations in the metal. The vibration or the first awakening touch caused the growth and feeling outward joy in the plant. This resulting joy in the plant gave further impetus to greater results to be actualised with the growth to an "instinctive force and sense, a nexus of joy and pain and hunger and emotion and fear and struggle in the vital mind of the animal." This paved a way for man, the Manu, the devising self-conscious creature, a developing imperfect mental being. As such the whole secret of earthly existence, the meaning and purpose of the terrestrial evolution to the discerning eye says Sri Aurobindo, is an "unfolding progressive evolution of a Spirit," a release of Its "hooded consciousness out of the inconscience Matter."⁵ Nothing is stationary or stable. Everything is a poise of rapid motion, the creation of Energy, the Consciousness-Force manifesting and evolving here. This invests our being and life, the meaning and purpose that determine our destiny. The purpose of this self-directed dynamic Consciousness cannot be discerned by the eye of reason or by any stretch of thought as in the words of Sri Aurobindo, "chit-shakti" not mind has created the world. Chitshakti is the thing which the scientists call in its various aspects Force and Energy but it is no material Force or Energy, it is the divine power of a self-existent Reality unrolling itself in Time; "forming itself not materially, not in substance of matter but in the substance of that self-consciousness into these images of form and force which make up the world."⁶

This uncreated, unborn, eternal and absolute Energy is called Shakti,

Maya and Prakriti. It brings about the manifestation of Purusha or Ishwara and works out the truth of its potentialities. This is the power of God that initiates, maintains, directs and leads the whole movement to its destined culmination. Nothing can be done or achieved without Shakti, the consciousness-Force of the Divine. The universe is a conscious manifestation of Conscious-Force or Chit-Shakti. This is Conscious-Existence in which Being moves into becoming guided to its destination by the Eye of Wisdom "prajna netroyam lokah" as puts the "Aitareya Upanishad," and so sings 'Savitri':

"Since in Infinity's Silence woke a word,
A Mother wisdom works in Nature's breast,
To pour delight on the heart of toil and want,
And press perfection on life's stumbling powers,
Impose heaven's-sentience on the obscure abyss,
And make dumb Matter conscious of its God."

—B4, C1

Consciousness, being, force, energy (shakti) is an "inherent and eternal state of being," involved in an inanimate Matter and what we call "inconscience" is its temporal, and apparent condition needed for the evolution of life, mind, soul and beyond. Thus, we find as M.P. Pandit puts it, "behind all the movements of Nature, material, vital or mental or spiritual, there is this Divine Shakti at work to fulfil the high intention of the Divine Being in its conscious Becoming." The "high intention" in the evolution of soul evolving in ignorance can certainly not be an extinction as the "sole release" from the so-called illusory world, as the soul is neither bound by action nor by inaction. The heroic soul carrying cross of the "indignity of mortal life" has undertaken the adventure of consciousness, knowing that the meaning of its birth in an imperfect body and mind is not to leave the task undone. By playing with infinite possibilities it has come to find the hidden Word, the long sought clue to invest mortality with immortality and wedding Matter with spirit transform the clay into a spiritual stuff.

The transformation of the clay is a hard nut to crack for the highest human power and intelligence. It is the Herculean task for scientists, a riddle for the gods to unknot. It is to be done by the shakti-yoga. For

without the consciousness and force of the Mother working in us, without her grace and knowledge this transformation is like a desire of moth for star. It is 'Para Shakti,' the supreme Force that alone can bring about the transformation of the complete man and divinise earth consciousness. Because:

"At the head she stands of birth and toil and fate,
In their slow round the cycles turn to her call.
Alone her hands can change Time's dragon base.
Hers in the mystery the Night conceals."⁸

Man with great difficulty, hard discipline and great effort can at best have self-realisation, find release in extinction, an escape from the life's cycles of birth and death at the immense loss of missing the joy of adventure, the excitement in the twists and turns of play, love and life in the sunlit fields of the new earth. The self-realization and transformation are the meaning of our spirit's birth lost in the depths of material inconscience of things. How without Shakti generated by the Shakti-yoga can there be any true self-realization and transformation? The Shakti only works on the conditions of light and truth and not on the conditions laid down by ignorance and falsehood of the egoism. If we have a call to tread this path, then the Shakti carries us like a child carried by the mother.

This path is for the heroic golden children of the Goddess of the strong who are the self-surrendered warriors of the supreme transmuting Power, the original Power and the transcendent and eternal Mother. She holds the Supreme concealed in her. She alone can lead us to the inner chambers of the secret Self; give us the taste of that "inexpressible Glory and communicate to us a higher Will and its consequence."⁹ All this cannot be done by the mind labouring in ignorance. The thinking mind can at the most form an inadequate and abstract conception of an Absolute or a supreme Person or an impersonal Principle or Presence. Because, "The One whom we adore as the Mother" as the Master realized and presented before us, "is the divine Conscious Force that dominates all existence, one and so many-sided that to follow her movement is impossible even for the quickest mind and for the freest and most vast intelligence. The Mother is the consciousness and force of the Supreme and for above all she creates. But something of her ways can be seen and felt through her

embodiments and the more sizeable because more defined and limited temperament and action of the goddess forms in whom she consents to be manifest to her creatures."¹⁰ The Mother's body of beauty "moons the sea of bliss" in which "Formless and the Formed" are joined, revealing herself in her transcendent, universal and individual forms. In her transcendent aspect, the Mother is 'para' or supreme Shakti standing above the worlds and linking the creation to the ever-unmanifest mystery of the Supreme. The beauty of her universal form is manifest in cosmic Mahashakti in her creation of all these beings that she contains and enters, supports and conducts all these million processes and forces. Mother India, the individual aspect of the Mother, contains the vaster ways of transcendent, and the universal existence living and near to us. Touching the individual Mother "stark and awake," we are safe in the arms of the Mother-Master consciousness, a blessed harmony of the human personality and the divine nature. The karma, the result of Energy in motion makes "All contraries prepare her harmony" so that:

"All here shall be one day her sweetness home."

Even for the devas to undertake this task is not a light and easy without the grace of the "Spirit's alchemist power," and for the modern man even to conceptualise what the Mother stands for is like the desire of night for the morn. To the modern mentality, it is hard to know the real 'savroop' of the Shakti, as it is not thought but feeling, being and becoming that makes us to know what penetrates thought and gives the realization of That for which the Mother stands for. The Mother or the Consciousness-Force fulfils the mind, senses and body by transcending them and imposes on them the divine mould. It results in re-materialization of the living matter into a new Consciousness with an ever-widening circumference of perfection. The type of rationality tethered to the life of sensation tinged with egoistic claims of likes and dislikes wallows in the pond of sex and belly-cheer and gets stuck in the cobwebs of evil, suffering and pain. It cannot even imagine how the Mother is the "Spirit's alchemist power" and

"The golden bridge, the wonderful fire.

The luminous heart of the unknown is she..."¹¹

So, how can the learned pandits delighting in physical emotions and

belly-cheer visualize and know what Sri Ramakrishna realized when he said: "All women are parts of the divine Mother. Woman is the incarnation of the Mother." We do not have a right concept even of our human mothers, who are sublime symbols of supreme power of Love that alone can transform the clay and kindle "her fire in the closed heart of things," as in the scheme of plodding Nature,

"All contraries prepare her harmony."¹²

Unfortunately the identity-crisis in which the men are labouring to the point of frustration and disgust, has been generated by a "thought phobia" of emotionalized communal or racial feeling, narrowing the arcs of head and heart into our being as Brahmins, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Rajputs, Mahajans, Dalits, Jews, Jains, etc. The situation has become tense. This is further aggrieved by the conflict of the skeptics, agnostics and atheists, secular rationalists conditioned by the scientific commercialism that has dehumanized man into the mechanical determinism of an animal and a machine. These are T.S. Eliot's "hallow men" with "stuffed heads," whirling in the ocean of change, suffering, evil, grief, and pain. They have made life insignificant like a tale told by an idiot in a wasteland world of dreary desert state of human consciousness and thought.

At this crucial stage of transition, the crisis in which man is caught, cannot only be resolved but also a new stage of evolution can be stepped up if man changes his consciousness, and knows the nature, power and purpose of Maa Shakti. When we regard life dispassionately to have an accurate and unemotional appreciation of existence we get the revelation that Nature, soul, mind, life and matter, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian are the waves of Energy, the Conscious-Force in motion. The Earth is not a dead matter but an invigorated touch of the living Mother that sings of the freedom in the bonds of creation. The Earth is a living and breathing impulse of the Infinite, a crystalized aspiration of Mother-Reality, the power that originates, sustains and directs the play of creation by dominating all existence. The soul is never allowed to stagnate, whether it succeeds or fails, it is always engaged on to new attempts. The 'glory and passion of the creative Force' shall force Earth's seeing to widen into the infinite. The Mother-force scatters electrified vibrations everywhere to force, even the brute elements in our nature

to something higher:

"Always She drives the souls to new attempts;
 Always her magical infinitude
 Forces to aspire the inert brute elements;
 As one who has all infinity to waste,
 She scatters the seed of the Eternal's strength
 On a half animate and crumbling mould,
 Plants heaven's delight in the heart's passionate mire."¹³

The creation a dynamic movement of Consciousness is a complex, riddling variegated landscape of a gigantic cosmic tree that was involved, and inconscient in the seed form out of which it evolved and become conscient and expressive. The word "creation" means a manifestation of that which was contained in the seed. It is a movement, a ceaseless change, motion and expression of the Spirit's alchemic Conscious-Force, that like an artist scientist creates the background of time-space-cause triangle for her myriad-mooded drama of creation of becoming herself the action and stage for the actors to fret and fume and depart. The passion of the creative Force gives name to the Nameless, makes manifest the Unmanifest and Unexpressed expressed through countless forms. And without her the Absolute forever would remain unmanifest, unknown in its vast alone. Therefore Existence is the play of Being and Consciousness, the two-in-one. The absolute power dwells in the silence of the Absolute. This "mute Force" vibrates or awakens as Chit or Consciousness that splits the Indivisibility into varieties of individual formations. From the womb of Silence arise a word, laughter and an expression of delight that is the source and purpose of creation.

It is the first original gesture of chit-shakti of the one Supreme Being that becomes Ishwara-Ishwari, Shiva-Shakti, the harmony of contraries, the drama of creation as 'a single ecstasy without a break.' This power of silence in depths of God, the featureless and formless "mute Force," is the transcendent Mother we adore. It is also called 'Aditi,' the undivided, indivisible and infinite consciousness. According to the Mother "the transcendent is one and two (or dual) at the same time."¹⁴ The Divine Mother who existed before the creation is a "movement of the Supreme or an action of the supreme or a state of the supreme or mode of the

supreme." In her myriad-mooded dance of creation, the Divine Mother is always constantly Transcendent, universal and Individual Mother. Individual aspect of the Mother is a self-explanatory expression of the coexistence of her transcendent and universal dimensions. But "beyond the manifestation" the Mother says, "there is no differentiation, that is, there are not two, there is only one."¹⁵ Creation is the play of the Two-in-One, in which "conception and execution, vision and creation unite in one single consciousness and action."¹⁶ In an urge for creation, the chit-shakti of the Being vibrates to become and be by pulverising itself "into infinite infinitesimal particles, the two standing as though opposite poles...stretching *ad infinitum* downwards, towards regions more and more impure, imperfect, narrow and dense of lesser and lesser values till we reach the bedrock of them all; the earth."¹⁷

Referring to the ancient tradition, the Mother says when Aditi the Supreme consciousness received the mission to create, she put out four emanations from her being, and these four emanations were made and given the charge to develop the universe."¹⁸ Sri Aurobindo too tells us of the four powers of the Supreme Ishwari in the present cycle of terrestrial evolution. These four personalities of the Mother have come forward to guide and effectuate the destiny of the hour. The earlier four emanations (Consciousness, Bliss, Truth and Life) went too far to get separated from the origin, turning into Unconsciousness, Suffering, Falsehood and Death to make tardy and long evolution necessary for their recovery into original glory. As the things went wrong and astray, the Aditi "made another creation of all the beings who became the gods, and parallel to the disorder created by the first four emanations; there was the development in order."¹⁹ The opening lines of Sri Aurobindo's "Savitri" refer to the condition of the creation before the gods took birth. The Poet-Seer begins his epic climb prior to creation, "the hour before the Gods awake." When the Gods appear, the greater and greater materialisation takes place, and a descending order of world furthers towards matter. Sri Aurobindo sees creation as "the divine Event," starting from the Night of "foreboding mind," at time when in

"The abysm of the unbodied Infinite,
A fathomless zero occupied the world."²⁰

"A fathomless zero," suggestive of the unconsciousness, the immobility,

lifelessness is the "abysm" of the "unbodied Infinite" that had become obscured and veiled by inconscience as a result of separation between the first emanations and their origin. Actually, even in the darkest unconsciousness there lurks the Light of consciousness of the Being goading the fallen Self to awake and trudge the tardy steps of evolution. The awakening symbolised in Dawn, brings a reminiscence of the Divine origin urging its heart to burst forth to wake up in a sudden consciousness:

"A power of fallen boundless self awake
Between the first and the last Nothingness,
Recalling the tenebrous womb from which it came,
Turned from the insoluble mystery of birth
And the tardy process of mortality,
And longed to reach its end in vacant Nought."²¹

The Vedic image of the Night—darkness engulfed in darkness—has a spiritual character of the absolute silence in whose depths the "mute force"

"...lay in a featureless and formless hush
Guarding from Time by her immobile sleep.
The ineffable puissance of his solitude."

—Savitri

It ceases to be some afar, abstract and something obscure, and acquires an objective character of the widening consciousness of a gradual manifestation of the spirit in the terrestrial evolution of the soul. Nescience out of which cosmos emerges was ruled before the creation by the "mother of Dreams" who pre-existed prior to Being as well as Non-being. Prior to the creation and the Gods presiding over the functions of the cosmos, there laid asleep the all-pervading figure of Night, a dark woman, "stretched immobile upon Silence' Marge" in her "unlit temple of Eternity." The temple is a revelation of the body of God behind the mask of Nescience, the "zero" sign hiding the immortal face. Universal Mother who was before now the "heedless mother" takes up the task, embarks upon the adventure of "the insoluble mystery of birth" and tardy process of mortality and the "endless need." So the "Eternal

Feminine" of Goethe "Is leading us forward" in a far greater way than the German poet could conceive of.

The transcendent Mother, in her aspect of Mahashakti, the universal Mother is the origin of the universe. The Mother of Dreams with her face of "crowded-infinite" embodies forms of Prajna, Hiranyagarbha and Virat. Prajna-form of her contains the seedlings of an infinite variety for patterning the original norms of creation, the lines and possibilities of growth and fruition. Then the Mother takes the form of the golden embryo the Hiraya garbha, in which the dream of creation awakens and crystalises further into her cosmic body, the Virat-roop or form of Space-Time continuum of the physical universe of dancing galaxies and Milky Ways. Sri Aurobindo's "The Mother of Dreams" is the "sphinx of eternity" who according to the Mother, "keeps vigil on the confines of the world like an enigma to be solved. This enigma is the problem of our life, the very *raison d'être* of the universe."²² This enigma, without invoking the power of the Mother cannot be resolved and the key to unlock the door got without the Grace:

"O consciousness, immobile and serene,
Thou watchest at the confines of the world
Like a sphinx of eternity
And yet to some Thou yieldest Thy secret
They can become
Thy sovereign Will which chooses
Without preference, executes without desire."²³

Nolini Kanta Gupta knew that the Mother of Dreams is a mighty dynamo of the Supreme creative Force that fabricates and throws out "endless streams of possible and impossible things. Worlds and gods and men and creatures are all her children—built with her flesh and blood, inspired by her breath, moved by her gesture."²⁴ The surprising and awe-inspiring in her riddling beauty, she is "the Mother not only of the Shining Ones but also of the Dark Ones. Calamity and prosperity, rise and fall are cadences in her enchanting symphony. She holds them all in her bosom and carries them forward through a variegated play, a chequered progressive evolution towards their highest and supreme Destiny upon this earth."²⁵

All schools accept Maya or Para Prakriti or Shakti as an active factor in creation. It is the power of infinite consciousness that comprehends, contains in itself measures and shapes in forms of beauty the vast illimitable Truth of infinite existence. She is "saundarya Lahari," the sea of Bliss and by bringing in the sun and the moon into the description of the Devi's eyes, sets the rhythm of Time in the eyelids of the Form that moons the seas of bliss. All the time divided in periods like day, night, fortnight, month, years, seasons, yugas, and kalpas is under the command of the Mother."²⁶ Therefore, "in all that is done in the universe," says Sri Aurobindo, "the Divine through his Shakti is behind all action but he is veiled by his yoga Maya, and works through the ego of the Jiva in the lower nature."²⁷ The Jivas ebb and flow in 'samsâra' (ceaseless change) are the creatures evolving in the Ignorance of lower Nature. They come under the sway of Maya. The divine concealed behind the layers of body, life and mind is "veiled" to the egoistic consciousness; yet works "through the ego of the Jiva in the lower nature," to make 'Adhara' ready and receptive for the Mother to pour her light, power, knowledge, consciousness and ananda into the plastic and supple mentalised-living-matter. Gods, Sages, Prophets and Seers are sparks of the unified field, the Infinite Energy. All is contained in That which is infinitely greater than Gods and also above all human realisation and accomplishments of saints and sages and avatars. It is the Conscious Force of the Being; the Brah̥ma-Shakti—not Gods, saints, prophets and scientists—that alone can integrate man's physical, vital and mental energies; de-nature evil make ignorance, disease, death, sin and suffering things of a forgotten past. For saints and prophets have come and gone; the world is the same "dog's tail" that they found hard nut to crack and calling it an illusion they turned tail from the world, leaving ingenerated energies of body, life and mind in hands of the hostile powers to rule the world.

We need the Mother—Individual to each evolving soul a marvelous Friend in man's toil and want; the power of Consciousness that makes us live in the Infinite by possessing the finite. Energy energizing itself is 'cit-tapas' or 'maha-taps.' The "cit," whose basis of all concentration is 'tapas' stands before satyam as a form of 'sadbrahman,' the essential intelligence that mothers myriad bodied universe. With the generated tapas-shakti of 'cit,' satyam and the Veda are directly self-manifest and luminous to the yogin as his yoga-shakti—the cause, thinker and creator of the world:

“...The primordial One,
Mother of the countless creatures,
Creatrix of bodies of lotus form, Vishnu, Shiva,
Who creates, preserves and destroys the worlds.”

The primordial One, the original transcendent śakti manifests as Mahashakti in the form of this infinite and conscious dynamism of the universe. The Divine Mother, the supreme ideatrix is creatrix, executrix and matrix of this endless creation. Standing above all worlds, she bears in her eternal consciousness the Supreme Divine. As a supreme creatrix, the Mother gives form to the Transcendent, the supreme Paratpara and makes the Divine dance with her in the movement of this endless creation.

In her three ways of being the Transcendent, the original supreme shakti stands above the worlds as ‘saravlokmayee-manideep-nivasni’ linking “the creation with the ever unmanifest mystery of the Supreme,” containing the Truths which she calls down to be manifested here and elsewhere. The wonder-magic of Yoga-maya embodies the everlasting Sachchidananda as Two-in-one; the dual aspect of Ishwar-Shakti, the dual principle of purusha-prakriti as her ‘Lilla’ of the self-revelation of the transcendent Existence in various orders of phenomenal existence. In her aspect of universal, the cosmic Mahashakti, a veiled power behind the movements of Ignorance she creates these beings and all things. Hiding herself in a blaze of Light, the Mother contains, enters, supports and conducts all these million processes and forces. From her issued forth enormous forms of Rakshasas, Assuras, Devas leaping into the arena of the world. Even the cause of Ignorance (avidya) is also the product of the workings of Mahamaya, the great limiting and measuring power of the Supreme Being. She is both the power of bondage as well as the power of liberation. “By Her” writes M.P. Pandit, “the whole universe is set in motion revolving incessantly and containing in it all that is mobile and immobile. She in short, is the power of Hari, the Lord of the universe—called yoga Nidra, the Sleep-Power of yoga or the super conscious poise of the supreme Being.”²⁸

The great World-Mother we adore is the personality of the transcendent Mother, a “power of the divine Omniscient will and Omnipotent

knowledge" in the form of the Cosmic Soul, evolving and expressing as an individual soul that is:

"Condemned to an imperfect body and mind,
In the inconscience of material things,
And the indignity of mortal life."²⁹

Even in the movement of soul's evolution in Ignorance the Mother abides, guiding and loving the soul more than the earthly mother to her child. Her creations are not illusions like a mirage but creations of her diminished substance. The Divine Mother dwells forever in us. Without our being aware of the "living presence" due to our distrust, doubt, weakness and selfishness, the Mother ever dwells in us:

"Speaks no word,
Voiceless, inscrutable, omniscient."
Hiding until our soul has seen, has heard
The secret of her strange embodiment."³⁰

The 'secret' of the Divine Mother's "strange embodiment," is her Individual aspect of coming down to the response of earth's aspiration. When the child yearns, its yearning calls down the Force to intervene. The Mother appears at a crucial stage of earth's evolution to govern, battle and conquer. The sage in "Durga-Saptshati" proclaims:

"Though she is eternal, immanent
in the whole universe which is her
embodiment, she takes birth again and again,
incarnates Herself in a special form of Her choice
for the successful regime of the Gods,
Devas—for establishing Divine
principles in the World-order that
its functionings may increasingly
harmonise with the eternal and
higher laws of the creative Godhead."

"The word "Maa" is greater, a hundred-fold than the father's says the "Brahmavaivarta Purana." It is the nature of the Mother to suffer willing crucifixion for her children and take up their pangs and sorrows to transmute them. Otherwise, how could the earth-soul be lifted to Light and Joy and Truth? The secret aim in the descent of Mahashakti of this triple-world is to bring down God into the lives of men; remould anew the complex of mentalized living matter on the principles of the higher trinity of Sat-cit-ananda. Holding in herself this infinite existence, she enters in every particle of the creation as life and soul. Even in our obscurity, difficulty, struggle, suffering and weakness, there is an invisible Hand that guides the steps of the pilgrim soul towards the temple of Eternity. Her māyā plunges us in ignorance and darkness and herself becomes dormant yoga-shakti or sleeping Energy, the Kundalini "coiled up" like

"...the sleeping King of Serpents,
Residing in the centre of the first Lotus."

Her plunging us into ignorance and inconscience, and Herself entering into the darkness and death is a mysterious play that cannot be interpreted or understood in terms of formal logic and human consciousness. But it is certain that She is accomplishing the 'task' of imposing God's plan on the mortal mould. The Mother's power is creative and effective, at once liberative and dynamic. It eliminates man's twisted and tangled movements of lower consciousness made of the stuff of ignorance and rebuilds and new-makes his soul and nature into the substance and force of a higher divine nature. The purpose of Mother's entering into the dark inconscience of Matter is necessary to manifest progressively the Divine that man is in his real nature. This evolutionary pull cannot permit man to remain satisfied as the apex of creation as the "coiled energy" is terrible and shattering. Its mounting tongue of Flame can either burn us if tainted with egoistic desire, rajasic ambition or can transform us if we have necessary purification and satisfy the conditions of truth and light. Then we are graced with a spiritual vision "darshan" and exclaim in rapture:

O Mother

Thou didst ascend like a streak of lightning -

And attainest the ethereal region."

The 'dharshan' translates itself into concrete reality of inner and outer life. The Mother being material and efficient cause of the creation is also the soul of Beauty, the inundation of Divine splendour that beggars description. In this realization all the subjective and objective experiences of the world within and without are felt as vibrations of the Divine Bliss, "ânanda-lahari." The world itself is seen as waves of divine beauty "soundarya lahari." Although O Mother; Thou art the primordial cause of the world:

"Yet art thou ever youthful,
Although thou art the Daughter of Mountain King,
Yet art thou full of tenderness."

—Tantrasara.

This is the vision of an illumined faith in which the Mystery is felt, lived deeply, intimately and intensely. The Vedas sing of this unsolved Mystery, whose key is kept above in the safety of light. Therefore, O Mother:

"Although thou are the Vedas,
Yet they cannot describe Thee.
Yet cannot their mind comprehend Thee."

—Tantrasara

Nonetheless, the living presence of the Mother harbours infinity and can be felt in everything and everywhere in the cosmic drama and seen in the earth-play arranged, planned and staged by her. The Mother is One, yet she comes to us in different aspects of her being. Wisdom, Power, Harmony, Perfection are four outstanding and leading personalities of the Mother in the world play. They are here in the terrestrial evolution to perfect and fulfil the fourfold personalities of man. It is through these four powers, the Mother "acts on her creatures, orders and harmonises her creations in the world, and directs the working out of her thousand forces."³¹ As Wisdom, the Mother is adored Maheswari, who in the words of the Mother "makes the plan of what the world ought to be. So she lays down the large lines of the plan of what the world should be of the universe. She has a vision of the whole, a global creation; instead of seeing the details she sees the totality of things.... She has a universal vision. She is less concerned with the details than with the whole."³² Dwelling

above the thinking mind and will, Maheswari opens for us the treasure-house of miraculous knowledge. There is no partiality in her dealings. She deals all men, things and happenings in tune with the law of things and according to their nature and consciousness. Her grace bestows luminosity to the wise, while those hostile to truth and light, reap consequences of their hostility. Seated in wideness, above the thinking mind and will, Imperial Maheswari sublimates and greatens our mind and will. When mind and will are opened to her infinite and cosmic vastness, she "floods" them "with a splendour beyond them." Only those stubbornly cherishing their liberty to prosper in things of ignorance and falsehood, forfeit her inexhaustible compassion. Her compassion does not bind her wisdom to turn the action from the course decreed. For Maheswari is "the mighty and wise One who opens us to the grandeur of the Supreme Light, to a treasure house of miraculous knowledge, to the measureless movement of the Mother's eternal forces."³³

But Wisdom needs for its mellow fruitfulness the splendid strength and irresistible passion of Mahakali aspect of the Mother. Sri Aurobindo sees Kali the great liberating power; the ardent force that makes for speedy progress. What is Mahakali like? "All I can tell you," the Mother attests, "is that she is not black, she doesn't stick out a big tongue, and she doesn't wear a necklace of human heads."³⁴ Excess of Light is dark to mortal eyes as to give the appearance of black Kali. Mahakali, higher than Kali appears usually with golden colour representing the victorious force of the Divine Mother, her fire and passion and speed is meant for the great achievements to be achieved now than hereafter. Mahakali clears the path of Maheswari. Her overwhelming will of the warrior mood of "divine violence" is swift to battle. It rushes to shatter every limit and obstacle. Her "attahâsya" or laughter makes light of defeat, death and power of Ignorance. Her appearance of terrific roaring moods is terrible to the asuras as She is ruthless in dealing with the haters of the Divine. Mahakali never shrinks or shirks from the battlefield. She is severe and dire with those obstinately ignorant and base and unwilling to change. To those who are treacherous, full of malignity and ill-will she smites by her scourge and:

"A raucous laughter spurts out of Her mouth,

A lightning flash gleams in Her eyes.

Frightful is the blood-red flower of Her anger."³⁵

Mahakali, the embodiment of world-shaking force and overwhelming will is not devoid of love for her children. The nature of Mahakali's blow, the Mother tells, "is that it makes you feel very happy. It gives you sweet warmth in the heart like that you feel quite satisfied. It comes when one truly wants to progress. It (blow) comes with a power of plenitude which holds an intense joy."³⁶ Her love is forever kind and deeply compassionate as she is the Mother of Love and "nothing can satisfy her that falls short of the supreme ecstasies, the highest heights, the noblest aims, and the largest vistas."³⁷ It is Mahakali that turns grave, soft and sweet Ananda into a "flaming joy of its most absolute intensities." Power (Mahakali) infuses a conquering might in Wisdom or Maheswari and gives a high and mounting movement to beauty and harmony (Mahalakshmi). To Mahasaraswati's slow and difficult labour after perfection; Mahakali's impetus and swiftness multiplies the power and shortens the way.

Wisdom and Strength without harmony of virtue remain forever aloof, remote, formidable and even unapproachable, save for a few endowed with superhuman strength and intelligence, having capacity for prolonged labour to plod on till they touch the dreadful peaks. Therefore the Divine Mother is not only Wisdom and Power but also a "miracle of eternal beauty" which is Mahalakshmi, the Harmony of the fine rhythm that weds the solar Wisdom and the Warrior mood to a compelling magic of an irresistible universal charm. In the words of the Master, "This is the power of Mahalakshmi, and there is no aspect of the Divine Shakti more attractive to the heart of embodied beings." Mahalakshmi's comprehending attraction and captivating grace, draws and holds things and forces and beings together. Even the ferocious animals love her, become gentle with her and are charmed with "the spell of intoxicating sweetness of the Divine," as Mahalakshmi is the "secret of divine harmonies" that makes existence a rapture and life full of grace and charm and tenderness.

The advent of Mahalakshmi into life is conditional. The demand of this "enchancing power" is love and beauty. Beauty, the fountainhead of love cannot live among persons who are ugly and mean, disharmonious in habits, thought and feeling, full of discord and agitation. All that is sordid, squalid, brutal and coarse repel her advent. Hatred and jealousy, greed and ingratitude are alien to the temperament of the beautiful Goddess. If we want that life should not be a tale of suffering and woe, that has

made this world a vale of tears then by adoring Mahalakshmi, the problems of existence can be turned to be the problems of Harmony. Her intricate and subtle opulence make life a rich work of celestial art that has the power to chisel in beauty the mind and soul, thoughts and feelings, every outward act and movement in perfect harmony and turn existence "a poem of sacred delight."

The Fourth Mahasaraswati is the Mother's power of work and her spirit of perfection and order. Her skill, patience and tireless striving for careful and flawless work are necessary to perfect the three aspects of the Mother. Mahasaraswati presides over their details of organization and execution as being "equipped with her close and profound capacity of intimate knowledge and careful flawless work and quiet and exact perfection in all things." Mahasaraswati loves single-minded, straightforward and sincere students whom she chooses to be the vehicles of her "intuitive mind conscious hand and discerning eye of the perfect worker." Her hand sustains our every step on the condition that we are single in our will, "for a double mind she will not tolerate and her revealing irony is merciless to drama and histrionics and self-deceit and pretence."³⁸ Sadhana of Goddess of science and skill is the same as yoga of skill in works that drives us towards the integrality of the higher nature. Thus "all the work of the other powers leans on her for its completeness; for she assures the material foundation, elaborates the stuff of detail and erects and rivets the armour of the structure."³⁹

Apart from the leading four powers of the infinite and conscious dynamism of the Mother, there are many other personalities and powers that are yet to descend and participate in the evolution of the earth nature. For that to happen the earth must be made ready, a call from below is necessary for the Grace to act on—not on the conditions lay down by the Falsehood and the Ignorance—the conditions of Light and Truth. Moreover, the Mother's Force is not a mechanism of forces governed by the lower or *apara prakriti*. "When I speak of the Mother's force" Sri Aurobindo clarifies, "I do not speak of the force of *prakriti*, which carries in it things of Ignorance but of the higher force of the Divine that descends from above to transform the nature." Nature or *prakriti* is the outer or executive side of Mahashakti. There is no doubt that something of the Mother is there in the mechanism of Nature; the physiognomy of *prakriti* which is the device of Shakti to draw from the Absolute the energies for

the play and possibilities of greater and more varied manifestation of the multiple Divine in the expanding and growing universe. The Divine Mother is Savitri that gives birth and grows. Savitri is the supreme worshipful Form, the source of the subsequent forms that the people worship here. The Mother we adore is the "Bride of Brahma" that has plunged in the death and darkness and obscurity for the fulfilment of the pre-creation covenant. This plunge is the Mother's love for her children, her avataric role to take up the cross of the earth, as only thus it is probable to release the deathless flame out of the rock of Inconscience in whose depths "mystery muses." The regular rhythm of her avatarhood was needed for:

"...pushing towards the shore,
our life must be."

So that we begin to

"...climb out of Space and Time to the peak of divine endeavour."⁴⁰

The Mother not only governs from above but also comes down to us as our individual Mother by putting on the mask of Ignorance and obscurity. She pays God's debt to humanity. Thus alone could God be brought down into the lives of men and human life turned to godlike eternal Life? The Divine Mother's taking upon herself the pangs and sorrows and suffering of the creation is "the great sacrifice called sometimes the sacrifice of the purusha but much more deeply the holocaust of Prakriti, the sacrifice of the Divine Mother."⁴¹ This sacrifice is brought about by our need of the Divine himself to be with us on this very earth. The Mother-consciousness we adore is that in which Form and Formless embrace in oneness, manifesting the self-existent joy of the Being in an endless dance of the creative Becoming. In her Individual aspect the Mother is worshipped variously. "To the Vaishnavities, "She is Sri, the eternal splendour abiding in the heart of Vishnu, the Supreme Being who maintains the manifestation of this cosmic existence. To the full-blown Shakta, she is the great Goddess, the Mother of all creation, of all the gods and their worlds, who creates, preserves and dissolves, who constitutes and directs all activities of the universe."⁴² For us she is Bharat-Shakti, Bharateshwari and the embodiment of perennial Wisdom, Power, Love and Perfection. In a deep spiritual experience, one can discern the beauty of Bharateshwari from Sagar Island to Sind and from Kashmir to Cape

Comorin. Often in times of crises, we have invoked her with the mystic-mantra: "Vande Mataram." Now again, we are fallen on evil days, facing a threat of disintegration from within and the marshalling of forces of death and destruction from outside. Again, our call to the Mother is for the recovery of our age-old spiritual power, buoyant faith and mounting flame of aspiration to unite the country in love and relationship of brothers. This stretch of earth, this conflicting mass of individualities, we call Hindustan is under an evolutionary stress, trying to evolve and crystalize into a rhythmic form of beauty that carries a resonance of Eternity. We have to awaken from the inconscience and lift the veil of ignorance to visualise that this geographical habitat, in which Indians—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christian and all—breathe and live is an outer body of the Mother. Behind the geographical isolation, and political suzerainty is the soul of India, a great Divine Maternal Power in whose single form are collected:

"All grace and glory and all divinity."

In words of the Mother: "India is a living being, as much living as say, Shiva. India is a goddess as Shiva is a God. If She likes, she can manifest in human form."⁴³ At the dawn of this realization all our petty fears and quarrels, divided opinions and false expectations vanish and melt in all-absorbing passion for the Mother and we forever:

"Bow to her who saves,

To her who drives from her armies of her foemen."

By chanting and humming with faith and feeling the revitalising mantra: 'Vande Mataram,' we adore the Consciousness Force of the Supreme; strive to realise that she is our Individual Mother, embodying her transcendent and universal ways of existence. Dwelling with faith on the inner import of the Mantra we contact with the Force and Presence it contains. We are then infused with fearlessness, strength and knowledge to handle victoriously the annihilating forces of Falsehood and Ignorance. For that to happen, we are to be aflame with self-abandonment for the Mother and be possessed by the flame of devotion for her. Our outer Swaraj is in a precarious condition. It can be lasting if in its achievement the "abandonment of the idea of self and its replacement by the idea of the nation" is made the basic condition.

The mantra is a clarion-call that awakens us to the reality of the mysterious Mother India. When Her worship becomes the law of our life, it is easy then to accomplish the task of establishing peace and Truth-Light on the Earth, garlanding each living form in a golden thread of Love. We need to consecrate life and mind and body; create new activities and modes of behaviour to bring about a new order of government, a natural economic set up and a new social consciousness. We have to strive to become new men, noble, dignified and strong, harmonising in our persons the principle of Shiva-Shakti—the static and the dynamic aspects of the Absolute—for an effective collaboration between the Spiritual Power and the Material Nature. It is unfortunate that the sons and daughters of Mother India are not in life and behaviour what they ought to be spiritually and culturally. A paralysing helplessness has numbed their sensibilities with feebleness and timidity. The physical nature's stupidity, the canker of doubt and disbelief, the unwillingness to change have dried up the sources of physical, mental, moral and spiritual strength, and the noble race has fallen on the thorns of life and bleeds. We need to live true spiritual life. True spirituality does not goad us to run to forests and dwell on mountaintops. It is to live in God and perfect life with its perfection, remoulding matter in a spiritual mould. Contrary to this, our skin-deep consciousness, the religions of churchanity create walls of separation. It is the violation of the principles of tolerance and justice that breed fanatics and fundamentalism. And our fanaticism, disunity, absurdity of petty quarrels over trifles, selfishness, pride, arrogance give opportunity to every hostile force to darken the ways of our wealth, prosperity and spiritual serenity that passeth understanding. What is the end of all that we are doing?

"A body rotting under a slab of stone

Or turned to ash in fire,

A mind dissolved, lost its forgotten thoughts

Is this the end."⁴⁴

We have reached a turning point in the history of our soul's evolution. It is either to sink back into the oblivion or ascend to the dazzling peaks of true spiritual realization. Our smoke-obscured worship, tainted with lust and ambition, hate and greed can hardly ascend upwards and call down God's bounty. Our attitude towards woman must undergo a radical

change. A new ideal of womanhood need to be rekindled and brought back with a new force and meaning. The day we dwindled from it and made women a plaything for sense-gratification, ignoring the Mother of strength—that Sri Ramakrishna saw and worshipped—we had a headlong fall from the glorious summits. We repent the cursed day, when due to ignorance and skin-deep consciousness, we doubted sati Sita's chastity; compelled her to pass through the flames of 'Agni-priksha,' eventually to leap into the womb of Earth, and be born as the Golden Mother of the future golden children of the marvelous Dawn. In our vain glory of unregenerate egoism, drunk in the wine of pride and lust, we committed a heinous sin—putting a last nail to our coffin—by dragging Draupdi, the queen of Bharat—a symbol of women-folk in general and to use Ruskin's phrase, the "Queen of the Garden" in particular—trying to strip her naked in the presence of the blind king, gamblers, scoffers and cowards. This dishonour of the Ideal womanhood went against the principle of 'dharma' and made Indians to have a blood bath in the war of Kurukshetra. The flames of war consumed the spiritual heroism of Indians and made a rich feast of the invincible warriors. India, after the war of Kurukshetra became so weak that the invaders were encouraged from all sides to rob her off her health, happiness, wealth and prosperity. She became a stagnant race. God bless our helpless Hind.

At the time of the English rule, the English were hell-bent to convert India into a British Colony and yoke Indians like galley slaves sunk in poverty, illiteracy and disease. In our fear and helplessness, we had lost all hope to revive our lost national glory and live as a civilised nation in a radically altered world scenario. At this juncture of our psychological crises, the call of mantra, "Vande Mataram," re-energized the Nation's psychic consciousness; like the ancient flame of Sacred Fire, shaking us from 'tamas' and passiveness, jolting people from inertia in which they had sunk, awakening them to fight the struggle for freedom till they were victorious. The inspiration released by the 'mantra' flagged down after the Independence was won, its adoration dwindled in the hearts of leaders enamoured of the newly won power and glittering material opulence of the West. The curse fell on us due the ill-ominous hour when the Britishers' strategy of divide and rule manipulated to exploit the religious fanaticism of ignorant masses, instigating fire of communal hate and bloodshed; tearing the body of Mother India by giving us a truncated freedom soaked in blood. The partition was against the laws of Nature

and worked against true religious sentiment that unites and harmonises. It was an ominous move and since then it has kept boiling the cauldron of hate and communal violence. The conditions of war and warlike preparations make for another Kurukshetra as the past war may turn to be a prologue to the future impending catastrophe, like the Vedic victories a prelude to the fulfilment that the future has in its womb."

In the meantime, the Mother, in her avataric role, disguised as Mira, consented to bloom as White Lotus in the native land of her soul, as Sri Arvind-Savroopni or the yoga Shakti of Sri Aurobindo's supramental Yoga incarnating in a family that had come from Egypt, just a year before she was born in Paris. In "trailing clouds of glory" she had come as "greatness from other countries" for guiding her children "to ascend from Nature to divinity's heights." Unlike saints and prophets, she plunged into life to churn the mud of the lake of mind and supermentalized it, as she said, "we are here upon earth to prepare the way for the new creation." The 'choice' made by the children to serve the Mother as 'heroic' pioneers of a "race that has no ego" is a call of the hour, an impulsion of the Divine consciousness to lead the race to develop steadily and make probable for the supramental being to take birth.

The earth is not only the "laboratory" of the Divine but also a "battle field" that the Incarnation turns into a "playfield" for her golden children to play in the sunlit fields of a new Dawn. The Mother's descent brings to surface this "covert truth of creation." The Mother from the beginning of creation has been working out this "truth" of creation. Obeying to will of her Lord, "moved by the mysterious fiat of the supreme," the Mother wraps herself in mortal-poverty to prepare the transformation of human clay and "work out something that was there in the possibilities of the Infinite." "Since the beginning of the earth," the Mother tells about herself "wherever and whenever there was the possibility of manifesting a ray of consciousness I was there,"¹⁶ as Being Consciousness and 'eternal power,' the Mother of Dreams has:

"...leapt from the Transcendent's secret breast
To build her rainbow worlds of mind and life
Between the superconscient absolute Light
And the Inconscient's vast unthinking toil

In the rolling and routine of Matters sleep
And the somnambulist motion of the stars
She forces on the cold unwilling Void
Her adventure of life, the passionate dreams of her lust."⁴⁷

The evolving world-phenomena being the product of Consciousness keeps its upward evolution. The Consciousness at every crucial stage descends to set flowing the frozen stream and make it ever going on. The need of the Divine to incarnate again and again and pass through the "portals of birth that is a death," is a God's debt to man. By taking upon herself the pangs of creation, the Incarnation can end the world-pain and its obstinate sorrow and suffering. The Mother cannot "afford to retire into a state of static, carefree peace away and aloof from the bleeding earth, for that would mean the earth's utter dissolution."⁴⁸ Therefore: -

"Amid the work of darker Powers she is here
To heal the evils and mistakes of Space
And change the tragedy of the ignorant world
Into a Divine Comedy of joy
And the laughter and the rapture of God's bliss."⁴⁹

The Mother in her Individual aspect is a mother to the child, chiseling her form of earth into her supernature. Born of affluent parents in Paris on 21 February 1878, Mira as the unusual child was above human consciousness, always united around her divine center, ruled and directed by it, she was "conscious of the mission to fulfil."⁵⁰ This unusual child (between two and five years of her) meditating most of the time:

"...remembering inlay a far home . . .
Lived guarded in her spirit's luminous cell."

Even in her childish moments she had precise and complete spiritual experience and could feel a powerful light above her head and this she continued to experience throughout:

"The nearness of a light still kept from earth,
 Feelings that only eternity could share,
 Thoughts natural and native to the gods."⁵¹

In her own words: "Between 11 and 13 a series of psychic and spiritual experiences revealed to me not only the existence of God but man's possibility of uniting with Him of realizing Him integrally in consciousness and action, of manifesting Him upon in a life divine."⁵² Perhaps, Wordsworth's ideal child is apostrophised in the child Mira, as:

"Whose external semblance doth belie,
 Thy soul's immensity;
 Thou best philosopher
 Mighty prophet; Seer Blest!"

As a child the Mother was exclusively occupied with studies—informing her, learning, understanding and knowing from the earliest childhood. The Mother was always a learner, a vigilant observer, registering everything, always learning because "nothing which interested me in my outer being as much as learning."⁵³ The unusual child could at that age master occultism, the knowledge of the subtle-physical, its relation with the most vital and link that connects the two. About the same time, several teachers from higher worlds visited her revealing many things of spiritual import. Among them was a frequent dark-complexioned luminous visitor-companion whom, to quote the Mother, "I was led to call him Krishna, and henceforth I was aware that it was with him (whom I knew I should meet on earth one day) that the divine work was to be done."⁵⁴

At about thirteen, every night she saw herself "clad in a magnificent golden robe," spreading in a kind of immense roof over miserable, suffering humanity that gives us the glimpse of her avataric role, her being the Individual aspect of the Mother. By implication "this activity of the night" brings to the fore the mission and task of the Mother: to light the burden of the "Man of sorrows" and prepare the advent of the new world of tomorrow. For this, to recall the mantric words of Sri Aurobindo:

"All Nature dumbly call to her alone
To heal with her feet the aching throb of life
And break the seals on the dim soul of man
And kindle her fire in the closed heart of things."

At the age of nineteen and twenty, Mira had "achieved conscious and constant union with the Divine Presence." During the same period, She "met an Indian," who told her to "Read the Gita with this knowledge, that in the Gita Krishna represents the immanent Divine, the Divine who is within you." And lo! The Mother says, "that within a month all the work was done."⁵⁵ In the words Sri Aurobindo, "The Mother was inwardly above the human in childhood and her history was verily the "manifestation of a growing Divine consciousness, not human turning into Divine." Conscious in herself of the Divine Presence, the Mother found clue to the fountains of universal force still unsealed to the earth consciousness. This was her task to unseal for a progressive universal harmony, "the realisation of human unity through the awakening in all the manifestation by all of the inner Divinity which is one."⁵⁶ In the Mother, the Formless and the Formed are joined in an ecstasy of oneness. Mira Ambika, spoke again to the world the "eternal word under a new form adopted to its present mentality."⁵⁷ She was an "ultramodern" just as Sri Aurobindo was a "modern avatar." In her avataric-role, she did not repeat the past, interpret and follow "what others had done before us." She began where others ended in Mukti and escape and otherworldly attitude. For her spirituality is the "sublimest of Adventures" in which 'mukti' is the first step of the soul's adventure into 'unexpected' and 'unpredictable' new regions of consciousness called the Supermind by Sri Aurobindo never before manifest on the earth. Awakening the earth to her golden destiny; the Mother of the nursery of a new race took her children into her arms, cultivating them to be the instruments and channels to the divine Force; her hero-warriors working to transform this world into the new world of tomorrow:

"Since God has made earth, earth must make in her God,
What hides within her breast she must reveal."

—Savitri XI, 1.

For the Mother, spirituality is no flight out of this world but a plunge into the depths of life. It is to bear to the end the burden of the heavy and weary weight of earth's inconscience and ignorance, its darkness and ugliness so that, eventually transfer them into consciousness, Knowledge, Light and Harmony to make existence significant and meaningful. The working of law in existence makes it binding for the avatar to identify himself with the world to relieve the suffering of the earth by undergoing its pain and suffering at first hand. It is so, that he who

"Would bring the heavens here
Must descend himself into clay
And the burden of the earthly nature bear
And tread the dolorous way."⁵⁸

Such is the God's labour, the price that the incarnation has to pay for the redemption of the earth and to raise the earth-soul to Light. Even for a movement the Mother cannot afford to retire into a state of utter bliss, away and aloof from the bleeding earth, for that would mean the earth's utter dissolution. Our Mother is "near to earth's wideness, intimate with Heaven." She has descended into the ages mud and mire settled in our subconscious mind and down below in the Inconscient, which none dared to churn or thought to purify this bottom of dark-turbid sea. The Mother—as reported by Nirodbaran—once said, "you must have seen pool where the water on the surface is clear, transparent and the mud is quietly settled below. We are churning the mud: as a result all the water has become turbid. It is the process of purification. None has done this before."⁵⁹ This purification for the transformation of the body (as the Mother tells us) "is not easy. If it were not for this aim, I (the Mother) would have gone to heaven long ago."

When the Mother met Sri Aurobindo in 1914, she was not as a European saint trying to settle in India in pursuit of some yogic or spiritual experience. The Mother was an adept in the Buddhist yoga and the yoga of the Gita even before she came to India. Mira Ambika is the Mother of Sri Aurobindo and "not a disciple of Sri Aurobindo." For, "she had the same realization and experiences as myself" are the words of Sri Aurobindo himself. She had already made the whole programme foreseen that this had to be done. Only a hymn of thanks giving was to be made as soon as the Mother recognised in Sri Aurobindo the "well

known being" that she "used to call Krishna." The Mother was convinced that her "place" and her "work" are near him in India, "the country of her soul." The momentous moment dawned on her when the experience of "double identity with That which is beyond and That which is all the manifestation," unite themselves and tasted "the infinite joy of the perfect certitude."⁶⁰ About the same time, in 1914 the Mother's identification of the physical consciousness with the Universal Mother consummated. "Of course," the Mother says, "I knew before this that I was the Mother, but the complete identification took place only in 1914."⁶¹ Her coming to India is a divine event as the coming of Bharateshwari back to the land of her soul to "give a concrete form to Sri Aurobindo's yoga," which without her help and cooperation "would not have been possible."

Thus surrendering all will, life, and self to Him; losing entirely the gross illusion of "me" and "mine," only Thy Will and Consciousness was revealed to her. She rose above nation, civilization, society, race, and belonged completely to the divine, without whom "I exist not," because "without me he is unmanifest." This "me" and the Divine are "one and the same person." It is Sri Aurobindomira. To think of "me" is to think of the Divine. The Mother continued to live in the country of her soul even after Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his body in December 1950 in order to hasten the advent of the Supermind. She lived here in order to "do his work which is by serving the Truth and enlightening mankind to hasten the rule of the Divine's Love upon earth."⁶² Because of the joint efforts of these two incarnations—one preparing the conditions from above and other helping the earth to receive it from below—the supreme event of breaking golden Light downwards was accomplished on February 29, 1956. The new light touched the Earth and a new Truth took the birth. It was not out of any personal urge she did it but as "a sacred duty in obedience to the dictates of the Supreme." She knew "who I am" and Sri Aurobindo too knew it, that the Emanation is not a deputy but the Mother who can put herself (emanate) in a way she likes. The doubts of the whole humanity would change nothing of this truth. Only she has chosen not to exercise her will, leaving everything to the will of the supreme Lord. The Mother makes it clear in her message of March 29, 1956:

"Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new Light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born,

The things that were promised are fulfilled."

Sri Mira Ambika is neither European nor French. "Her birth" as Nolini Kanta rightly estimates, "symbolized the point of joining East of Europe and West of Asia, the union of Europe and Asia—the two harmonized and that reflects the character of Mother's life and destiny." The birth of the Mother in France, her coming to India via Japan, is mystically significant in laying down the broad lines of her yogic sadhana of earth-transformation. Japan, the "cherry-blossom" of the Mother stands for an ordered artistic vitality in pursuit of beauty and life. The Mother's vision of Japanese woman holding a child to her clasp is highly suggestive of a "marvelous Dawn" when she holds in clasp her "sun-eyed children":

"The great creators with wide brows of calm,
The massive barrier-breakers of the world,
And wrestlers with destiny in her lists of will,
The architects of immortality."⁶³

The essential for the children of the Mother is to "hammer on" and strive for a living contact with the Mother, becoming more and more receptive to her conscious force and not putting the cart before the horse by raising "questions about the details of the material existence of this body." Because, the life of the Mother and that of Sri Aurobindo "has not been on the surface for men to see." The Mother is the "creatix of a new age of consciousness." In her past incarnations she had worked from behind the veil, assisting the growth of earth-consciousness. Now when Sri Aurobindo drew the curtain "at the dawn of a new age of supramental creation" to make it clear to our vision and to recall the speech of Romen, "she has manifested as the Divine Mother herself, for without her the great descent of the supramental Truth is not possible, and with this great descent her total revelation cannot become a fact."⁶⁴

The Mother had always been working behind the veil, fighting the powers of Ignorance and Falsehood from behind. When Sri Aurobindo lifted the veil and revealed the Mother, the conscious-Force of the Divine that is Mira Ambika, the children struck with awe and wonder fell at the knees in adoration to have the glimpse of the enigmatic relationship of the Two-in-one that was revealed. It was certain that the Divine is

unapproachable without the grace of the Conscious-Force, the Mother that makes the Unmanifest concrete and palpable to our relations. It is the nature of yoga-Maya to veil the Supreme, hide Him in her luminous heart, envelop him in her arms of Time-Space-Continuum and yet keep It behind the gaze of thought. She not only creates name-form but also penetrates thought to chisel form into perfect harmony and perfect beauty embodying nameless in names that become—to use Shelley's phrase, "the nurslings of immortality." Sri Mira Ambika or Sri Arvindsavrupni is the Principle of progressive harmony of the play of Two-in-One leading towards the advent of the "Divine unity upon earth through an organised and harmonious diversity." The Lilla or the play is a significant step towards a "transfusion of the Divine Person into the substance of human person." The Mother, the manifested divinity, the Conscious Power is marching like the conqueror's sword towards a New creation and is preparing her children for the realization of the future. The Mother does not speak in the name of any particular doctrine or of a man. Her words are not teaching but force in action that comes direct from the Divine. There is always an occult or hidden purpose behind her movements that are guided by inner laws and inner movements. She is not what people worship here. Our lean ego-obscured prayers, mechanically telling of beads; selfish-worship breeding hate and fanaticism; the dreamy mediations adding to the existing *tamas*, the religious piety swollen with communal ego are negative qualities that cannot touch the Mother. The acts of falsehood and ignorance that the children perpetrate fall like blows on the body of the Mother. For the Mother Brahmin, Sikh, Muslim, Christian, Shudra are alike as her children of immortal bliss. They are dear to her as her own self and she will never them forsake. She is "the Mother of all godheads and all strengths" and the "mediatrix" that binds earth to the Supreme.

"She keeps her will that hopes to divinise clay;

Failure cannot repress, defeat o'erthrow,

Time cannot weary her nor the void subdue,

The ages have not made her passion less,

No Victory she admits of Death or Fate."⁶⁵

The Mother is One or sTwo-in-one with countless children of varying natures and different attitudes. The beauty and mystery of the Mother

manifesting through her executive force of Prakriti, in the variety and difference makes Oneness a myriad-mooded daffodils dancing in glee of a rhythmic flow to repeat with Yeats, "Eternal beauty wandering on its way." This rhythmic flow of beauty within a time-space-continuum is 'eternal,' ever fresh, perpetually re-creating and never repeating. Yet always unchanged, Impenetrable Mystery that cannot be deciphered. It is Knowledge through identity that makes us feel, realise and become That which is unutterable. Hindus, Muslims and Christians have yet to learn from each other. They have not merely to become better Hindus, better Muslims and better Christians but what is more important, a better human beings forever widening in consciousness to love and live in the beauty of identity in separateness, oneness in manifoldness, and sameness in difference. This can be achieved spontaneously, simply when we adore and worship Mother India in all her manifestations. This inner realization or direct perception does not involve any interference of mind and thought but the liberation of the restricted consciousness in the working of the Divine Shakti increasing in us with the completeness of our response to her and our growing surrender.

Bharatvarsha, the ancient Hind is called 'dharma-bhumi' and 'Karam-bhumi,' the action within the ambit of 'dharma.' Any imbalance in the scales of Justice invites the wrath of Rudra and awakens the warrior-mood of the Mother. Consequences of actions may be delayed but are not annulled. To harbour impurity, give vent to separatist impulses, exult selfish desires, communal passions, ambitions of a group higher and greater than Mother India and dharma of the evolving Nation, is to incur the wrath of Mahakali and invite a blow. Even the egoistical sublime, noble, wise and heroic Beeshimpitamah could not put his cherished vow above the 'dharma' of Nation without drastic consequences. By obstinately putting his cherished pledge above the truth of country made him run the risk of falling in the Devil's party, commanding the army of falsehood with the consequence that the noble race was destroyed and the country thrown into shambles. The anti-divine forces compelled him to taste the poison of mistaking untrue for true, private and personal higher than the good of Nation by lying helplessly, bleeding on the bed of arrows. It illustrates the truth that Bharateshwari or the Mother India is higher and greater than our personal vows or pledges or parents or sons and daughters or our personal ambitions. Otherwise, anarchy is let loose by the sons of Darkness who are "full of passionate intensity" to

drown a little left innocence of the weak with no conviction left in them. Already, Mahakali's simmering wrath has assumed the Chinmastika form, ready to wade through the blood of her children who have sold their souls for lust and belly-cheer to the Enemy of humanity. When cunning, proud and terrible Demons overwhelm the earth then:

"Suddenly the Mother roars with the voice of thousand oceans.

Loud like a thunderbolt her cry,

Shatters the sleep of her sons."

Ours is calm, patient and long suffering race that has never hankered after political greatness and military power. And "mark my words," remarked Swami Vivekanada, "it never will be." Because pillars of our Nation are raised on the granite spiritual foundations that stand higher and triumphant over all disorder, evil and ugliness of human desire and ego. The Kings and Rulers attempted to control India with their political power, administrative dexterity and military strength but there was never a time when any King or Ruler could keep Mother Indian in a sovereign grip. In this regard, on a purely organizational ground, perhaps the political and administrative history of the Mauryan, the Gupta and the Mughal empires reveal a dismal failure. With all the political and military power, they could not for long hold Bharat-Shakti united, progressive and harmonious. Of course they had their contribution in keeping her cultural flame just alive, but this is not our point here and our vision of the Mother we adore. Their vision of Mother India with a broad-based political, administrative religious complex did not possess the eye and thought of the Rishi, the poet-Seer. In all of them there was a self-centered artificiality playing on the surface without delving the depths of the cultural landscape to be thrilled with the vibrations of spiritual Bliss carried on the waves of divine beauty. Thus for the good, the Kings and Rulers had to pass and show us that the religion or language is no definite means of unity—at least in a political sense. The principle of unity is itself discernable in a myriad-minded "landscape. It transcends the artificial barriers of thought and the constructions of the mind. We have nothing to presume, construct or superimpose as the unity we seek is already there. We need only to "be conscious" of Beauty of the 'landscape' and offer our lives to the Shakti to be re-energised, re-patterned and remoulded in a divine mould. If we can put our heads together, join our hearts, stand fast in the service and

love of Mother India, we are instantaneously transformed and become strong, whole and perfect as hero-warriors of the Mother. The "mystery" concealed by the "Night" is she and our birth in utter forgetfulness is not an "aimless fall" but there is the "meaning of our spirit's birth." The Mother, the "Spirit's alchemic power" lies dormant in us, awakening, it can make heroes of us possessing the power to compel the world to rotate around the Truth-light and remake history in terms of Truth-thought and Truth-feeling emanating in Truth-action.

The Shakti of millions of gods to whom Sri Ramakrishna worshipped and became one, is the soul and destiny of India. Let us "be conscious" of her living presence and install her deathless divine Form in every hearth and home. The Mother of unthinkable Energy "demand worship" says Sri Aurobindo, "not for Her own sake but in order that she may help us and give Herself to us." All our strength depends on making contact with the universal Force. Choice is with us, whether we prefer to live shutting ourselves within the house of ego or open the window of the consciousness on the vistas of the Infinite and become "facets and manifestations of Almighty power"? Do we want to love the mighty Mother stark awake as "a beauty and mystery flesh and stone can drape" or like Asura confront her "when she dances bathing in the stream of flowing blood?" As the Master puts it, "Few are those from whom the Grace withdraws but many are those who withdraw from the Grace."

Mother India, the experimental Land of 'Brahma Vidya' or 'shakti-yoga' cannot perish. No amount of dark hostile powers—working within and outside—can destroy the Land embodying the principle of 'dharma' (the divine order) in humanity whose foundations of Light and Truth and Love are laid by the 'tapas' of her Rishis. The power of 'Brahma Vidya' or 'shakti-yoga' that made the Poet-Seers creators and bringers of new dawns is a psychological, social and spiritual discipline for wholeness and perfection. It does not recognize any distinction between the secular and the spiritual or the worldly and otherworldly. The Spirit in the becoming of the world is the drama of Shiva-Shakti. It is the Absolute and its Power—a dynamic identity of the creative Cosmic Energy, the Shakti of the transcendent. In this experience, life and world are not a painful illusion or snare of Maya as much as a glorious expression of the power, beauty and bliss of the Divine Mother. Even the most ugly, vilest and the most grotesque aspects of life are only a deformed expression of some truth of the Divine Shakti.

India in the words of Sri Aurobindo has the "most splendid destiny." We need only to come out of the self-made cocoons, liberate ourselves from the "traditional nostrums" and enlighten and enlarge consciousness. When we are thus liberated we have new birth in our becoming the representative of the Divine in humanity for building up a new world order—not through money-power, political policy or any technological revolution as the poet had it:

"Our ideal is not an advance technological future,
Our goal is a living, loving radiant New Future."

For:

"The old is static and scatheless, sans emprise,
That guarantees comfort and security."

Therefore:

"Beware, 'tis world and life-negating."

As

"The new hold the promise of endless adventure;
This all-embracing and all-integrating."⁶⁶

At this perilous hour when we are reduced to the egos confronting each other, asserting our egoistic claims; the Mother is here with us, in the form of the Maiden Goddess, Kanyakumari undergoing hard tapas for the hour when her Lord shall come down to celebrate the celestial wedding of Earth and Heaven. Our mundane mind cannot comprehend this secret truth of creation as we resist and even deny the mystery of Mother's birth in Time. But we do not know that our purity and intensity of aspiration can bring that hour soon. Our wishful thinking of escape from the body is no gain, for there is no 'geographical' heaven or hell to repair to. Our Mother, the soul of the Earth is the divine consort of Shiva absorbed in tapas, still waiting for her Lord to come in the southern most region of India. For "Shiva shall manifest on the earth" the Mother assures and,

"...the hour of the Divine draws near,
 The Mighty Mother shall take birth in Time,
 And God be born into the human clay,
 In forms made ready by your human lives
 Then shall the Truth supreme be given to men?"

The experience of the Poet-Seers, verifications and tests of the yogis conclude that Mother India is not a piece of earth, a political kingdom, a military regime, a social set-up of conflicting religions but the shakti of the millions called Bhawani, the Mother everywhere and all the time revealing to her chosen few who belong to her:

"I am infinite energy which streams forth from the Eternal in the world and the Eternal in yourselves. I am the Mother of the universe, the Mother of the worlds and for you who are children of the sacred Land, Aryabhumi made of her clay and reared by her sun and winds, I am Bhawani Bharati, Mother India." (Vande Mataram)

India the sunlit temple of Eternity, is an experience of the universe as our home and the earth our bed of beauty and love and joy. This is the "future religion of the entire world, the Eternal Religion which is to harmonise all religions, sciences and philosophies and make mankind one soul." By living this Religion we can put an end to alienation between God and man, Nature and man, man and man as an imperative step for the earth to be divinised into a new paradise. Till then the mystery of the coiled-energy remains veiled in us, persistently asking her children, "How many will live for me? How many will die for me?" and waits our answers":

"Hiding until our soul has seen, has heard
 The secret of her strange embodiment."

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Chapter - V

THE PHENOMENON OF AVATARHOOD

The phenomenon of Avatarhood and the birth of India as a nation are not two sundered poles apart. They are the two facets of the Reality; linked together in a growth and flowering of the spiritual civilization towards which humanity with all its crooked and devious paths shall reach after a long travail. In truth, the birth and growing of our Nation is an 'intervention' of the Divine in the form of spiritual Light and Knowledge descending on the ancient Fathers, the first formulators of thought to lay down the foundation of the Vedic age, "a great psychological seed-time," as observes V. Madhusudan Reddy, "a spiritual spring-time of spirit and wonderful dawn-time of the Divine's self-revelation"¹ in the form of clear and deeper thought embodying in heroic action and manifold psychic creation. The 'subtle intuitive vision' of the great forefathers, discerned the principles and aims of the spiritual race and sought to build up a unique structure of India's perennial culture and civilization.

Thus, it is out of the mountain caves, the glades of forests deep there rolled the streams of Knowledge, Truth and Bliss, fertilizing the seed of a mighty Nation. A Nation—not a mere piece of land and mountains encircled by the sea—in her Avatar role on earth is a spiritual shakti of myriad-moods, a mystery of unity in diversity to be embodied in the earth-consciousness. India, an experimental laboratory of the Divine has a mission to "build the future of mankind," and according to Sri Aurobindo, "in India alone can the effective Avatar appear to the nations."² The establishment of the Vedic civilization and the expansion of the mighty race are less due to any external forces or imperfect human efforts, as due to the 'intervention' of the divine force according to the requirements of earth's conditions. Directly or indirectly it is the Divine that prepares—slowly but steadily earth's consciousness for the flaming dawns of the future. After all the culminating stroke of the Vedas is the vision of the Absolute, the Perfect,

the Alone, wearing the garb of space-time continuum to be mysteriously hidden in every force and form of creation as the Self of our self. He needs to take up the cross of self-sacrifice to lead and direct the cycles of evolution. As, he has "assumed" the "mask" of our "imperfection" and hides in us as "our secret self," so to transfigure humanity, divinise mankind is the adventure of the Divine's consciousness-Force; the play of the Divine-child playing the game of Involution and Evolution.

Therefore:

"This transfiguration is earth's due to heaven;
A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme:
His nature we must put on as he put ours,
We are sons of God and must be even as he,
His human portion, we must grow divine...
Our life is a paradox with God for key."³

If our life is not a "paradox with God for key" then, how can human being unlock the paradox? If the Divine consciousness does not descend into human birth, and human consciousness, to reveal Godhead in humanity, how can the earth soul be raised to light? The parable of ten Avatars is deeply linked with the evolution of Earth. Without the Spirit descending into the Matter, the pent up life could not be vitalized and living Matter start thinking. The Humanity involved in the ignorance and inconstancy of Nature, in which it is stuck, cannot be raised and uplifted if there is no substitution of the person of the divine being for the human person, and an infiltration of it into all movements. There must be an exemplar who takes up the cross, suffers willing crucifixion to demonstrate how "the tears in mortal life" to use Virgil's phrase can become a gateway to divinise earth-consciousness, recast us in a "figure of divinity" and "impose"

"A plan of Godhead on the mortal's mould
Lifting our finite minds to his infinite,
Touching the moment with eternity."⁴

The creation is not an aimless fall and our existence an "inconsequential freak of Matter" that has no essential significance, nor is the Matter or

inconscious energy the "fantasy-builder."⁵ Even, if we suppose that creation is an inexplicable freak or an error of the Spirit; then, it has only an illusory significance, which vanishes into nothingness. Nonetheless, the significance of our existence here determines our destiny existing already in us, involved in the creation as a necessity and a potentiality. The truth of this potentiality already involved in the creation is being worked out through various evolutionary time-cycles. For, creation is a manifestation of the Divine Consciousness already inherent in it; so nothing can evolve if there is not something involved that has to flower or manifest. It is the Involution that explains the process of Evolution. Just as fruit comes out of a flower and flower is potentially involved in the bud that evolves from the branch. Again, the branch is involved in the tree and the tree itself is hidden in the seed. Just as in the process and development of tree and fruit, light, water and wind intervene; so to facilitate the process of progressive manifestation, there is a time-to-time intervention from the above. This intervention of Power which descends is called Avatar, assuming an individual form as the manifestation of the infinite delight in an infinite number of finites, in the cycle of beginning, continuation and the end of things visualized by the great Trinity: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva as a single indivisible phenomena of the inexhaustible Divine Consciousness. The rhythm of creation cannot be justified without the continuation of the object and a condition for its renewal or regeneration laid down by the destruction. Vishnu—all pervading one—who is responsible for the process of continuation must incarnate again and again, unfolding the new phases of the process.

The conscious element involved in the process of creation is all-pervading Vishnu and His numerous Avatars or the Vibhūtis, the partial incarnations or emanations. In principle, everything is a manifestation of the Divine. When this manifestation or evolution is stuck in the mud and mire of Matter's inconscience and obscurity and thrown into the torpor of self-oblivion, the Avatar comes to play the role and reveal a new possibility. The Vibhūtis only further the Divine scheme. The Avatar is in response to the aspiration of the suffering Earth, the call of human soul for a human intermediary, so that he may feel the Divine something close to his own humanity and sensible in a human influence and example. The call is responded by the Divine manifesting in human appearance as the Incarnation, the Avatar. The Divine consciousness, descending into human birth as Krishna, Christ, Buddha is for the great

world work to realize and establish—not in the outward things only—something essential and radical needed for the terrestrial evolution which is the evolution of the embodied spirit through successive stages towards the Divine.

If the Divine involved in creation is the cause of evolution of the universe that came into existence with "sphota" or the "Big-Bang" explosion, liberating energy in all directions to give birth to the expanding universe; then it suggests the sudden surge of the pent-up Energy, the longing of the "unbodied Infinite" in the "fathomless Zero" calling "out of the Silence his mute Force":

"Where she lay in featureless and formless hush
Guarding from Time by her immobile sleep
The ineffable puissance of his solitude."⁶

There are two mythological pictures often seen in certain religious books. One of the pictures shows Vishnu as Bala-Krishna lying on a floating banyan leaf during Maha-Pralaya, the state of the darkest unconsciousness in which nothing existed. Banyan representing unity and eternity, points out that at the center of nothingness the eternal seed of creation is present invisibly. The child, "Recalling the tenebrous womb from which it came," longed "to reach its end in vacant Naught"⁷ to bring forth again the world of consciousness. The other picture shows Vishnu lying on these Sesanaga, with Brahma seated on the lotus coming out of his naval. This indicates: every creation to come is linked with the previous one and evolution starts with Involution. Whatever is left of the previous creation i.e. 'Śesa,' at the center of it there is the urge to protect life. Therefore, the Maha Vishnu waits in yoga-nidra for the lotus of creation to bloom from within to start a fresh adventure in Consciousness.

These two mythological pictures point out that Krsna, as a child is the state immediately after the Involution of the out-going creation; while, fully grown Vishnu as Sesaśāyi is a state just before the evolution or beginning of the incoming creation. During the period of Involution or Maha-pralaya there is nothing except Vishnu, "the preserving aspect of the Trimurti" lying dormant. Vishnu all pervading and all pervasive, "the preserver of life" is the link to the past as well as the future creation. The

Bali-vamana myth about the three steps of Vishnu has a deeper implication than the mythological one. In terms of sudden interventions, they are three steps of the Divine to make earth ready to conceive life. With the first step He entered the Milky Way, the 'Ksirāsagra,' and relaxed on 'Sesanaga,' the state of vibrant energy in readiness, waiting to take shape. In the second step He manifested Himself the life giver Sun, the source and cause of all life. A nucleus was formed, the sun drew out of it sufficient matter to form our solar system. In the course of time, the earth, the home of mankind or 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,' cooled down enough to get filled with water to form an ocean. When the earth was ready to conceive life, Vishnu took the third step and entered into the ocean as Narayana, the Lord of Water and evolved life on earth. He took new forms to nourish and protect life in two ways. First, as Hari, meaning one whose colour is greenish blue to cover the entire earth with greenness of chlorophyll to nourish every kind of life. Secondly, as Kesava, meaning one with silky hair with various forms to populate the land.

The "Brahma-Samhita," points out many incarnations of the Lord that are eternal, blissful, all-knowing, usually understood by the Vedic scholars, and become manifest to pure, unalloyed devotees. "Brahma Samhita" (5.39) proclaims the worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda (Krsna), incarnating as Rama, Narsimha etc. Sri Krsna is the original Personality of Godhead that incarnates personally. The Vedas, too declare that the Lord, although one without a second, is like the Vaidurya stone which changes colour yet still remains the same as the Lord manifesting Himself in innumerable forms. Narayana, the Lord of all our being and action is seated secret in our heart forever and becomes manifest even in the human form as the Avatar, the incarnate Godhead. "Although I am unborn," says Krishna in the Gita (4:6) "and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the lord of all existences, yet I stand upon my own Nature and appear in every millennium in my original transcendental form by my self-Maya." Despite the fact says Swami Prabhupada, the founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna consciousness, "Lord Krsna grows from childhood to boyhood and boyhood to youth and astonishingly enough He never ages beyond youth. At the time of the Battle of Kurukshetra, He had many grandchildren at home or in other words, He had sufficiently aged by material calculations. Still He looked just like a young man of twenty or twenty five years old. He never grows old like us,

although He is the oldest person in the whole creation-past, present and future. Neither His body nor His intelligence ever deteriorate or undergo any change. Therefore, "it is clear that in spite of His being in the material world, He is the same unborn, eternal form of bliss and knowledge, changeless in His transcendental body and intelligence."⁸

The substitution of the person of a divine being for the human person, which we call Avatar, is a long, subtle and persistent process that takes up all the nature and its action. The birth divine is unlike the birth of human being caught in the shackles of the Nature. The word "srjami" in the Gita (4:7), means the Lord manifests Himself as He is. Krishna says, " sambhavam." "I become" or 'I come;' But how? By what method, or process the Lord of the Universe, 'prabhu,' who is both transcendent and immanent assumes divine individuality? It by standing on, presiding over My own Nature i.e. Self-Maya, I come into being, "Prâkr̥tim svâm adhisthaya." The self-Maya or power, all measuring creativity assumes form and shape in a way that the Impersonal becomes Person in Self-manifestation. The power of Maya is that, which measures and limits the formless and Nameless; the Unborn is being born and, the Lord of existences becomes a being in the world of time and space. It is the "process" as pointed out by H. Maheswari, "of subjugating; His power of action to His Omnipotent Will expressing His Omniscience, the Lord comes into being as an individual Entity."⁹ This is something that teases us out of thought, baffles understanding and human intelligence with amazement and wonder. But the truth embraces even contraries. The descent of the Avatar is essentially a spiritual phenomenon "atmanam srjami" i.e. divinity taking up humanity with all its outward limitations under the conditions of Nature which it uses according to rules of the game.

The modern man living in Eliot's Wasteland of dreary desert sands of nothingness fails to grasp the phenomenon of Avatarhood with its skin-deep consciousness and understanding of life and nature. The bird of faith of the common mentality cannot soar beyond the triple modes of lower nature. All is greek to his turbid lower consciousness, wallowing in the mud-pond of desires, cravings and passions. Even for the rationalized human consciousness, it is not easy to believe and accept the phenomenon of Avatarhood. For material scientist and the Vitalist, the birth of God as man is impossibility and at best, a superstition. The materialist cannot

even look at it, since he is an atheist and cannot go beyond the senses to see what penetrates thought. The Deist who sings of sorrow, sin, heaven and hell can only deride and think it a folly. And, to the dualist torn in his consciousness by fancying an unbridgeable gulf between the human and the divine nature, Avatarhood sounds like a blasphemy. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "The Avatar does not come as a thaumaturgy magician, but as a divine leader of humanity. Even human sorrow and physical suffering he must assume and use so as to show, first, how that suffering may be a means of redemption, as did Christ. Secondly, to show how, having been assumed by the divine soul in the human nature, it can also be overcome in the same nature as did Buddha."¹⁰ The rationalist cannot digest all this, for, he is incapable to transcend reason to fulfil it in the light of intuition. He would even cry, "If Christ is the Son of God, why couldn't he come down from the cross." In his thinking the Avatar was not divine as he died a dog's death or by disease. The ignorance of the rationalist misses the root of the whole matter because, according to the Bible, he is unable to "make wisdom your closet kin and with wisdom, get understanding."

In the light the Vedantic wisdom that is revealed, inspired, intuited, seen and heard all these formidable objections vanish like clouds before the sun. The Consciousness-Force of the Divine that dominates all existence gives birth to soul or spirit to intervene in the world mechanism of Law and direct the movements of its forces or the action of its minds and bodies. In principle the world, its every particle is the divine force in action, which determines and directs every moment. God inhabits every form, governs and possesses every soul and mind. As such, "Every creature is the disguised Narayana." He lives in all. Behind every finite working, there is all supporting infinite, all-will and all-knowledge. He rules the world by his intimate omnipresence, and His "rule is not an absentee, foreign and external government; he governs all because he exceeds all, but because he dwells within all moments and is their absolute soul and spirit."¹¹ Seeing in the light of wisdom all objections disappear like mist over mountain driven; all doubt and skepticism melts before a solar blaze. The division made by the intellectual reason that stands before wisdom and opposes to the possibility of Avatarhood is not real in terms of the logic of the Infinite. For, "it is the All-existence, the Universal Godhead figuring itself in the type of humanity; there it works out certain possibilities, develops, evolves, as we now say, certain powers of its

manifestations. What it evolves is itself; is the spirit."¹²

The Spirit we talk about is not an abstraction, something unknown Nothingness but a sublime vision of the self-existent being with unconditioned delight and infinite power of consciousness. This power of will and intelligence is at work in every cell of an atom. Therefore, Matter and body are not devoid of consciousness but a massed motion of conscious force used for the variable relations of consciousness. This universal will and intelligence develops its powers from form to form, the power or the Godhead within through the outer imperfect and egoistic nature-consciousness. This is God's universal method with creatures. In this universal dealing he works behind, hidden in the cavern, "guhayam," as the Veda puts it, and the Gita expresses it, "In the heart of all existences the Lord abides turning all existences as if mounted on a machine by Maya."

This universal method is the indirect dealing with creatures, God hiding behind the veil. Therefore, Avatar is necessary to "break the veil between himself and humanity." He is born by the power of his Self-Maya—not helplessly driven by the prakriti through ignorance like the ordinary birth of creatures—'prakritim svam adhisthaya—atmamayaya,' with conscious control so that the prakriti is full of light and the will of the Purusha. The Avatarhood—the Immortal consenting to be born in mortal poverty is the whole mystic phenomenon of the universe. Only yogis in devotion, "bhaktya mam abhijanati (8:15) can know how He descends into the material world, how he takes births and what activities He performs. His "Janma karma ca me diyam," His birth is divine, His work too is divine. All his activities are spiritual, and therefore he has spiritual names. He is named according to His transcendental qualities 'guna-karma-nama.' In the words of Swami Prabhupada, "He appears in His original form as 'Krsna sac-cid-ananda-vigraha,' to carry out his mission of 'paritranaaya sadhunam vinaaya ca duskrtam... For those who think that He has no form and no work to do, Krsna comes to show that indeed He works—He acts in unlimited ways, and therefore according to His work He has many-many thousand names."¹³

The Avatarhood has a link with the Vedic concept of the sacrifice of Purusha, which in the words of Kireet Joshi "is one of the mysteries of the Vedic tradition" and "can be seen to be the precursor of the concept of the Divine avatar which has played a major role in the epical and

puranic literature of India."¹⁴ There are various kinds of avatars such as purusavatars, gunavataras, lilavataras, sktyavesa, manvantara avatars and yugavataras—all appearing on schedule the entire universe. But Lord Krsna is the primeval Lord, the fountainhead of all avatâras. According to Swami Prabhupada, "From Lord Brahma down, all the living entities engaged in the service of the Lord are extraordinary, and are called vibhuti. A living entity especially empowered to act on behalf of the Lord is called vibhuti; where as the visnu-tattva incarnations of the Lord, such as the Matsya avatara are called vibhva."¹⁵ Thus comes the parable of ten incarnations inextricably linked with evolutionary nisus in man and Nature.

The phenomenon of Avatarhood envisages the progression of evolution, as an enormous secular movement covering more ages that one can easily count. In this ordered change man belongs to the vertebrate type of living beings. The first vertebrates were the fish to appear in water. Next came reptiles that moved to seashore. Mammals followed later to occupy the land. As life evolved a unique being came into existence that was neither fully-grown man nor animal but had characteristic of both. Out of this evolved the primitive man who amidst the huge reptiles and mammals was weak and dwarf. "The puranas admit," writes Sri Aurobindo, "the creation of animal forms before the appearance of man and in the symbol of the Ten Avatars traces the growth of our evolution from the fish through the animal, the man-animal and the developed human being to the different stages of our present incomplete evolution."¹⁶ the Lord appears physically from age to age, yuge yuge, according to the needs and pace of the human evolution. "The progression," Sri Aurobindo says, "is striking and unmistakable."

In this spirit it is possible to interpret the ten incarnations of Vishnu. As J.B.S. Haldane observed, "... the pictures of the Avatars of Vishnu gave at least a rough idea of vertebrate evolution. Fishes preceded reptiles such as tortoises, and the reptiles were the ancestors of generalized mammals like the man-lion, and more specialized ones such as the boar. Now it seems possible that the immediate ancestor of man was a form which could be called a dwarf." The first Avatar is Matsya, the primeval descent of life in the water, the first vertebrate to appear. It is at a time when Brahma was lying sleep in the ocean of the annihilation of all (pralaya), the demon Haya-griva stole away the Vedas and entered into Patala i.e.

the lowest world. Bhagavan killed the Daitya and returned the Vedas to Brahma. The biological fact of evolution of the fish has been linked to the popular legend of the Flood or Pralaya. It is said that the Fish helped Manu, the ancestor of man to start the creation again and populate the earth after the deluge. After Matsya comes Kurmavantara, the tortoise, a crawling creature on the land, signifying the enfoldment of a new phase of consciousness. The Kurma Avatar enabled the world to recover some precious things that were lost in the deluge. By giving its back for keeping the churning rod, the Kûrmâvatâra made possible Sagara-Manthana or the churning of the ocean, helping the Devas to get Amrta, the nectar of immortality out of the ocean.

Varahavantara is the stage of evolution when mammals appeared on land. It indicated as observed by Manoj Das, "the emergence of a life-force capable of fighting against the odds of the environment in order to make room for itself; no longer an absolutely passive and docile creature of circumstances."¹⁷ The purpose of Varaha (the Boar) Avatar was to rescue the earth from the waters after it had been dragged down by a demon named Hiranyaksa. When Brahma brooded: "How can I pull out the earth immersed in unfathomable waters?" Not knowing what to do, he remembered the All-pervasive Lord, immediately, a young issue of boar (Varaha), just of the size of the thumb, white in colour, spontaneously appeared from the nostrils of lotus-born Brahma and in a moment grew into the size of a gigantic elephant. The Narasimha Avatar, the Man-lion more like a beast, indicates the first appearance of man. It is the symbol of transition from animal to man, not necessarily evolving from the animal but a vision suggesting the possibility of a new being. This stage of evolution is the Nature's achievement of the degree of harmony, grace and dynamism (as represented by the lion) within the limitations of consciousness at its disposal until then. Narasimha freed the world from the oppression of Hiranyakasipu, who was the father of Prahlada. Vishnu killed Hiranyakasipu and saved Prahlada. The dwarf, man-soul Vâmana is the next Avatar marking the beginning of man. His small physical structure is a figurative presentation of his physical conditions. Vamana was to restore the power of the gods, which had been eclipsed by the penance and devotion of King Bali.

Upto the Avatar of Vamana, the accent is on the physical changes. Thereafter, it concerns the progress in consciousness the evolution is now ethical, cultural and spiritual. From this incarnation onwards, we find the development of man and the progress of civilization. It concerns the progress in consciousness. The next Avatar is that of the violent Asuric man, Rama of the Axe parasurama, amsa-avatara, the partial incarnation of Sri Vishnu. He represents a state of evolution, when man could hold various kinds of tools for his progress. In his avataric role, he was fierce and terrible like Rudra and delivered the country from the oppression of Ksatriya rulers twenty one times. The sage holding the axe wielding a great-uncontrolled power is in the evolutionary course indifferent to ultra ethical force manifesting in Rama. He needs to be controlled by a qualitatively greater power of enriched ethical prudence. Therefore, in a kind of confrontation, the Rama of the Axe confronts Sri Rama and surrenders all the spiritual power of his Avatarhood to Rama. It is the power exercised by passion that is being sublimated and transmuted by the spiritual excellence of calm strength representing in "the divinely-natured man, a greater Rama."

In parasurama, we have a vision of the vitally energized Rajasic Avatar, with his conquering axe fighting against the dictatorship in favour of society. By laying the foundation of social ethics, the Rama with axe paved a way for 'dharma-raja,' the kingdom ruled by the righteous; so the subsequent advent of Rama with a mighty bow. It is the development of rajasic man into the sattwic excellence of Rama whose, unconquerable bowshots arrows under the conditions of truth and light. After completing the mission, the Rama of the Axe, the rajasic Avatar, leaves the stage—with all his passion spent—for Sri Rama, the hero of the Ramayana to stabilize the devastated humanity in a Kingdom founded on and ruled by 'dharma.' Rama comes when parasu-rama is still on the scene and augments an ideal living, leading upwards from the vital-rajasic to the sattwic mental man. Sri Ramachandra continues the line of previous Avatars, takes forward the steps of evolution by giving impetus to the dormant ethical self of humanity to emerge. With his rejection of the animal and destruction of asura in man, Rama set a universal standard of living in harmony that gives transparency to thought, word and deed and takes man forward to the next step of soul's evolution growing steadily behind the veil.

Sri Ram, the Avatar of the "sattwic mind" is a crystalized form of 'dharma' as enshrined in his person of sublime and spiritual faculties and powers. Rama as a person to use Emerson's dictum is: "Beauty which is the flowering of virtue." But this "Beauty" harmonizes the contraries of Nature and can sometimes be awful and fierce. It is a treasure-house of virtues like large-heartedness, broad-mindedness, spiritual knowledge, compassion, spirit for selfless service of humanity, mental dispassion, renunciation, valour, tolerance, high moral standards, universal love, blissfulness, truth, justice, leadership, foresightedness, etc. Sri Aurobindo finds that, "In reading the Ramayana, one feels a great afflatus, which makes of its story a parable of great critical transitional event that happened in the terrestrial evolution and gives to the main character's personality and action of the large typical cosmic kind which these actions would not have had if they had been done by another man in another scheme of events."¹⁸ Maryada Purusottama Rama, tried to stamp and organize earth with the sattwic light of elevated life for the advent of Ramraja, the cherished dream of Gandhi, who breathed 'Hey Rama' and left the stage in dismay and consternation. The maryada of Rama is the Rule of 'dharma', the government of the Right through self-sacrifice and public spirit. It enjoins man to abide by the principles of truth, obedience, cooperation and harmony. It is to cultivate the sense of domestic and social order and be an ideal lover, ideal husband-wife, ideal son and ideal friend.

After Rajasic and Sattwic Avatars, there is the appearance of the Overmental, superman Avatar Sri Krishna, final in place, the complete divine manhood. We find in Krishna, the very type and form and perfect model of human existence. Sri Krishna supports the evolution through the Overmind to lead it towards the everlasting bliss of Krishna-Consciousness. His personality, his acts and his work, according to Sri Aurobindo, have "a significance and a effective power that are part of something essential to be done in the history of the earth and the races."¹⁹ The Krishna-Consciousness is implied in the person of Krishna, as no consciousness can exist without a Being who is Consciousness and Sri Aurobindo writes, "I have always regarded the incarnation as a fact and accepted the historicity of Krishna as I accept the historicity of Christ."²⁰ As such, "the Divine has visibly touched the earth, made the complete manifestation possible, and made it possible for the divine supernature

to descend into this evolving but still very imperfect terrestrial nature."²¹ Experience goes to reveal that Sri Krishna is not merely a spiritual prophet; but a realiser and establisher of something essential and radical needed for the terrestrial evolution by manifesting and expanding in the composite form of Sri Aurobindomira-Consciousness. This we shall find just ahead. We shall adore the next Incarnation in series including the awakened spiritual man—the nirguna Avatar of Buddha.

Till Krishna the Avatars are all for furtherance of the evolutionary scheme. Now comes the Buddha; in whom consciousness tilts to other extreme. "The acceptance of the Buddha as the incarnation of Vishnu," observes Manoj Das, "was not a strategy to wipe out Buddhism—as some commentators have observed, for the plane at which this synthesis was possible was too sublime to be suspected of any pragmatic design."²² From the "Bhagavatam," we understand that Lord Buddha is the incarnation of Krsna who appeared when materialism was rampant and materialists were using the pretext of the Vedas. Lord Buddha stopped the demonic tendency to animal sacrifice without reference to the Vedic principle. The working of the divine consciousness in the person of Buddha indirectly helped the evolutionary scheme to march towards the next step of consciousness.

The prince-ascetic, disgusted by the experience of life's disease, suffering, decay and death was torn by world's anguish. He devised a path of escape presenting before the seeker the choice of an alternative—the way to Nirvana. Sri Aurobindo calls Nirvana "a negative liberation," the way for those who have no patience for a possible transformation of life upon the earth itself, so they overleap the dynamic aspect of the reality. In their haste and impatience they break away from the cycle of birth and death and long for that state (nirvan) in which the burden of the mystery, heavy and weary weight of this unintelligible world is annulled and lost forever, where:

"Neither sun shines there,
Nor sparkles the moon,
Pranas and sound are hushed into silence,
No god, no man, no soul, no cosmos exists there..."

In Buddha's "anguish to overcome world-anguish" writes V. Madusudhan Reddy; there is a spiritual allurements to "overleap all the intermediary stages including the dynamic aspect of Reality."²³ Buddha—perhaps to the extent Shankracharya, too, following the line of "neti, neti" formula completed only one aspect of soul's purpose in body and the object of terrestrial evolution. By denying the objective of the evolving earth-consciousness they did not return to it for the complete affirmation of matter, life and mind as one Reality that recognizes no gulf in knowledge and action. Instead, they hurried to cut the snare of karma, suppress mind and senses to get lost in the absolute Naught. They ran away to monasteries, to shut themselves in the ivory-towers of meditation, as for them, all at last was a dream of past, birth, and death was an illusion or composed of such stuff as dreams are made of.

In the Aurobindoian context, Buddha and Shankara by calling away the dynamic side of liberation, negate its creative aim and purpose, efface the soul-personality, its powers and possibilities in the featureless and nameless Absolute and ignore the affirmation of the "Lover's everlasting yes." The kind of realization and liberation they consider as the sine qua non of human life is "still negative" not a positive affirmation and an attempt to transform life and physical consciousness. For mere negation of the lower prakriti without the affirmation and substitution of para prakriti, the supreme Nature is a partial and incomplete realization that leaves Earth's evolution undone in the hands of the hostile powers. The "Bhuddhist-Adwaita view" is shooting too far without returning upon earth to complete the spiral of human perfection. The "Nirvanic view" that preaches the gospel of cessation from the world and action is too negative as "Escape brings not the victory and the crown" as only "half God's cosmic work is done."²⁴ Besides it cuts the very roots of Soul's increasing individualization and spiritualization of mind, life and body. Does not this leap into a "glad divine abyss", leave in disgust and indifference "self's mission and self's power?" Is not it "too early to rejoice"? In the Nirvanic realization of the "boundless silence of the Self," nothing is finished and the world, which is the "curled tail," is not straightened for:

"Only the everlasting No has neared
And stared into thy eyes and killed thy heart:

But where is the Lover's everlasting yes,
And immortality in the secret heart,
The Voice that chants to the creator Fire..."²⁵

After the Overmental superman Avatar in Sri Krishna, and the nirguna Avatar in Buddha, the hero on the winged horse, Kalki is yet to incarnate. It is the "myth with a futuristic element." According to Krishnamurti, only with the speed of a winged horse can man catch up with the wave of evolution, as it is a mutation within consciousness that alone can grant complete freedom to act rightly. The language of the Gita demands that He shall "descend" to "break the iron law," for only thus He can "change Nature's doom by the lone spirit's power." In the Puranic terms, riding on a white horse named Devadatta, He will destroy all Dasyus (robbers) spread on the earth in the guise of kings, and Mlecchas of crooked nature. By annihilating the barbaric elements persisting in man, He shall usher in gnostic humanity. That most glorious Bhagavan Kalki will perform Asvamedha sacrifice after having killed all the sinners, evil-doers and wicked persons, then in this sacrifice, He will give away the entire earth to the Brahmins as gift i.e. the rule of the divinised mind and invincible vital strength.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the last Avatar, Kalki, "accomplishes the work Krishna began, he fulfils in power the great struggle which the previous Avatars prepared in all its potentialities."²⁶ Such assumption for the modern mentality is difficult to digest, yet the parable of ten Avatars is a working hypothesis of the line of an ordered march towards which global consciousness is marching and Nature labouring since the dawn of creation. The parable assumes a new significance when it visualises the tenth Avatar. Spiritual, over-mental and supramental are the last three stages in the evolutionary perfection of the growing soul-consciousness in humanity. The evolution, a tardy process is not in a "straight line," it is full of twists and turns of the curvature of the cycles, yuge-yuge in a "series of ascents and descents." In the evolution of consciousness the world is not an illusion or a mirage but an evolving form of the Divine involved in the creation. The "object" of the Avatar is to "lead" and not a retreat into Nothingness. The meaning and manifestation of the Avatar is to utilize the negation, *neti neti* as a source of purification to prepare matter, life and mind for the higher stages of

evolution and not to discard or annihilate them. Sri Aurobindo, the expanding Krishna-consciousness the Avatar of tomorrow, is a "way of the Infinite dealing with the finite."²⁷ Sri Aurobindo finds this negation a "coherent part of the arrangement in the nature. He corrects the "mistake" of the Buddhist and the mayavadin Vedantin shedding illusory tears at the illusory world.

Sri Aurobindo regards the spiritual history of humanity—particularly that of India—a constant embodiment of the divine purpose. It is not a sealed book with any possibility of something new and progressive, "the lines of which have to be constantly repeated." To open new horizons, prepare mankind for a progressive union with Nature and God is the purpose and mission of Avatar. At the back of cosmic and individual ordered march is the creative power of Avatarhood, enacting this mysterious drama of an ever-widening and deepening circumference of consciousness. The creative power of the avatar, stirs and spurs the tardy coils of Evolution to wind on to let matter breathe life and become mentalised living Matter that can think and aspire. Again, it is the Avatar the magic-mystery of the humanized personality of the Divine that comes to us in relationship and love to "untie the cosmic knot." Thus alone, the humanity driven by "life's brief will" can be released from the misery of pity and fear and taken forward towards the countless possibilities in the "Eternal's hour."

The phenomenon of Avatarhood is the story of the Divine's intervention at every critical moment of the Earth. It is a parable of Evolution in which the growth of matter, life and mind is an instrumental means in the growth of consciousness and gradual manifestation of the divinity in man. The sudden "interventions" amidst unforeseen catastrophes, special and unique in Indian context have universal repercussions. In India, the concept of evolution existed centuries before Darwin as the principle in the cycle of birth and death working in the evolution of the soul. Whenever into the law of the existing mode of existence, there drops all of a sudden, a being and consciousness and force obliterating and reshaping the existing mode of existence is called 'intervention.' Otherwise, evolution, the ordered march is hampered, arrested, and becomes stagnant like an unchanging clod or repetitive animal. The 'intervention' brings about radical turns in life and destiny of humanity. Every step forward is a battle for Light and the victory over the forces

of Darkness and Death is not possible without overt or covert power of the Divine, who "knows the law and natural line of things" and directly intervenes at the crucial juncture of evolution. In fact, the spirals of evolution are helped and guided at each stage or level of their ascent. Otherwise, they get tangled, stuck in darkness and do not emerge into new forms of the changing age.

The mystery of 'avatarhood' reveals us that, this is not a "dead rotating universe" and we do not aimlessly whirl "upon a casual globe." There is as Sri Aurobindo puts "some secret intention in the creation of the material universe." In the working of Nature, in the depths of Life, there always lurks something incalculable and unforeseen. The purpose of the descent of the Divine in human form is to fulfil this secret intention as:

"One who has shaped this world is ever its Lord:

Our errors are his steps upon the way;

He works through the fierce vicissitudes of our lives,

He works through the hard breath of battle and toil,

He works through our sins and sorrows and our tears.

His knowledge overrules our nescience."²⁸

The Avatar is an inevitable need of the evolutionary world. Without it the human type of consciousness cannot be made compatible with the divine consciousness, made gradually to manifest. The manifestation of the Divine in the human being makes it possible to give a spiritual mould of divine manhood, so that it is easy for the seeking soul of the human being to cast itself in the new mould. How, otherwise can Nature shall "manifest secret God" if the Spirit shall "not take the human play:"

"To leap and bridge the chasm of Ignorance,

And heal the hollow yearning gulfs of Life.

And fill the abyss that is the universe."²⁹

Moreover, the lonely and companionless strength, without Krishna, the marvelous Friend in our midst can at the most have a lonely flight into the spiritual skies, and remain suspended in "privacy of glorious Light." In that case evolution shall come to stand still or regress into the Inconscience. The descent of the Divine is an evolutionary need and for

the perfection of the instruments of mind, life and body. As Amal Kiran said, "these instruments are obstinate creatures, they set conditions to the Divine—they say, 'if we are to be divinised, show us that you can be humanized.'" The descent is made in order to assist the evolution of these instruments towards their legitimate fulfilment as spiritualized mental-vital-body complex. Therefore to quote K.D. Sethena "the conditions are quite legitimate, and the Divine knows it very well and He hurries to become an Avatar every now and then—that is to say, every few thousand years! For unless the Divine gets on intimate terms with the earth, the earth is unable to respond."³⁰ The birth of man into Godhead is only probable when the Divine becomes human to show humanity how to become Divine. "The Avatar exemplifies," says Sri Aurobindo, "the possibility of the Divine manifestation in the human being, so that man may see what that is and take courage to grow into it."³¹ The Avatar comes to us as 'Savitri' puts it:

"As man disguised the cosmic Greatness works,
And finds the mystic inaccessible gate
And open the immortals' golden door,
Man human follows in God's human steps."

The Avatara i.e. Krishna loosing himself variously, is a unique phenomena that happens yuge yuge at a time of acute evolutionary crisis in the earth's "great transitional stages." Any such crisis in the history of the world is termed by the Gita "dharmasya glani," deterioration of Dharma caused by an upsurge of darkness. But "dharma" is not a mere social or moral thing and cannot be delimited to the 'varanasrama' dharma. Dharma in its fullest is deepest and largest conception. It is the divine principle that holds together or coordinates our inner and outer activities, governs all our relations with other beings, with nature and with God. 'Dharma' as Sri Aurobindo puts it in his "Essays on the Gita" is "the inner and outer law by which the divine Will and wisdom work out the spiritual evolution of mankind and its circumstances and results in the life of the race." The fundamental principle of "dharma" is eternal and unchanging; but its forms are continuously changing and evolving. For, the Gita, the intervention and the subsequent emergence of a new consciousness with the new birth are essential of world evolution. And "this," writes V. Madsudhan Reddy, "does not reject in toto the doctrine of continuity, but sets up along with it, the principle of emergence,

without which we cannot obtain a complete picture of evolution."³² The upholding of the Dharma is not all-sufficient object in itself, not the supreme possible aim for the manifestation of a Christ, a Krishna, and a Buddha; but is only the general condition of a higher aim and more supreme and divine utility. The birth of God in humanity, manifesting itself in human form and nature for "bhu bara harna," the lighting of the earth's load is only one aspect of the phenomenon of Avatarhood. In the conduct and promotion of the eternal dharma of man, whenever certain difficulties or impediments of Nature start becoming obstacles there is thus fading and the crisis of dharma in the course of evolution. The perversions of anti-divine tendencies throw the seekers of the good in peril. The men become evil-minded and evildoers. So the deliverance of the good and the destruction of the evil make the descent of the Divine imperative. Such is the assurance given by the Lord to Bharata's descendent in the battle filed of Kurukshetra:

Whenever there is a fall in the Dharma,
I manifest myself as human being
To uphold the Dharma, destroy the
Wicked and protect the righteous.

But the God's labour does not end by removing the sinful, preserving the virtuous and re-establishing the reign of law. The coming of the Avatar "simply for the sake of dharma would be an otiose phenomenon," as it is more serving than saving and there is the other side of the phenomenon of Avatarhood. The upholding of the Dharma is intended to help man to rise into the divine nature and consciousness. Its main purpose is the birth of man into the Godhead.

The dual phenomena of the Avatar are descent and ascent. On the external side, the Avatar's role is to act upon the external world in order to maintain and restore dharma. But there is an inward side of the Divine. It is the special role and function of the Avatar; his superhuman labour in "Matter's night," so that the individual and the soul of the race is made fit to receive new forms of revelation, and become enriched in its power of upward self-folding. Necessarily, the descent of the Divine in humanity adds a new creative impulse and purpose to the perennial stream of Sanatan dharma by making past and present an arc beyond which gleam untrodden realms of the divine consciousness, and as Sri Aurobindo says;

"Our very splendid achievements of yesterday,
Are today's most formidable impediments."

The "formidable impediments" fronting the law of inner workings that govern our being are perversion, contradiction, impurity, narrowness, bondage, darkness, weakness, vileness, discard, suffering, division, etc. In his progressive march man has to leave behind all that is hideous and crude. Man has to strive against the reactionary force that draws backward and downward and makes for evil, ignorance and darkness. The Gita tells us that the world is the theatre of our struggle against the inner and outer enemies. In the inner struggle the slaying of fear, weakness, desire, ignorance, egoism is the victory. The outer battle is waged between the godlike nature in man, the powers of the Dharma in the human collectivity supported by the Divine; and the men of the Titanic or demoniac, the Asuric and Rankshasic nature whose head is a violent egoism and those who represent and strive to satisfy it. Therefore says Sri Aurobindo, "the Avatar of sorrow and suffering must come before there can be the Avatar of divine joy: the human limitation must be assumed in order to show how it can be overcome."³³ The suffering of the Avatar has a direct bearing on the liberation of humanity and the earth-nature.

In order to usher the second coming, the Avatar of sorrow needed to drink poison, absorb in himself falsehood and ignorance of humanity, be nailed on the cross so that through suffering, pain, and agony of death mankind is baptised in Fire. To accelerate the process of spiritual evolution, it was imperative that the son of immaculate virgin Mother be born as the Avatar, assuming the mask of human imperfection to suffer willing crucifixion for the love and service of the Father. The apocalypse of Christhood is a wonder miracle of the divine Nature. It brings eternity into the hour; shortens the ages struggle as dramatized in a single hour of Christ's dramatic enactment of the divine sacrifice, in order to make the field ready for the "second coming" of the Warrior of the Light—in whom Lamb-Tiger are harmonized and shall wreck vengeance on those who nailed Love on the cross by degrading Christianity to the belly-cheer of Churchanity that has stifled the Christ-spirit within a narrow sectarian creed for centuries.

Jesus Christ is the "Lord's aspect of Love," the lamb of self-sacrifice, dying so that others can live. The Hindus spontaneously recognize Christ as a divine incarnation. His earthly career of hardly thirty-three years was full of sweetness, tenderness, tragedy and pathos. It is spiritually inspiring, beautiful and elevating. In his death lurks the mystery of resurrection, the secret promise of a growing Avatarhood of the advancing age. The work of Jesus Christ was not to "fulfil" but a dramatic enactment of the divine sacrifice. In the words of the Mother, "the death of Christ was the starting point of a new stage in the evolution of human civilization."³⁴ Sri Aurobindo too, saw in the death of Christ a greater historical significance and consequences than the death of Caesar. It resurrected the Christ in the hearts of millions. It established a Christhood, an art of living that unlocks the "Kingdom of Heaven within," and makes man "as perfect as Father in the Heaven."

Jesus, born of the virgin Mother, the parâ prakriti or parâ Maya, is the son of the Father incarnating in the lower Nature to enshrine there, the light of the triple-Godhead in the house of flesh. Sri Aurobindo finds in this the "inner doctrine of the Christian incarnation, in its Trinity the Father is above in the inner Heaven; the Son or the supreme Prakriti become Jiva of the Gita, descends as the divine Man upon the earth, in the mortal body, the Holy Spirit, pure Self, Brahmic consciousness is that which makes them one and that also in which they communicate: for we hear of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus and it is the same descent which brings down the powers of the higher consciousness into the simple humanity of the Apostles."³⁵ It is all-love whose essence is self-sacrifice and service. It is the supreme force that can force the Divine to come down to the level of ignorant, helpless and suffering humanity, accepting defeat, failure death as ransom for the release of light and draughts of immortality. Love means to lose oneself in the service of the Father hiding in the suffering humanity. It is to be one with the Christ in oneself and in all. Dr. Radhakrishnan writes in his classic *Religion and Culture*, p 144, "The cross means physical suffering, earthly defeat but spiritual victory. Through suffering lies the way to liberation." 'Cross,' originally the vision of the Two-in-One or the One-in-Two is also the Trisual or Tridant, that pierces the layers of ignorance, falsehood, penetrates the granite rock of Inconscience and sets free the cows (rays) of the golden Sun. Christ did not come for the personal salvation as like Krishna he was born free to be conceived in a divine way. His personal

suffering and death is a grace for the pure in heart and a deathblow to the asuric portion of humanity as the wages of sin. "Success" sang Emily Dickinson, "is held sweet for those who never succeed" in asuric and egoistic ambitions, yet their failure and defeat is the success of humanity. The sacrifice of the Lord is "sweet" in sadness and failure of the lower self is made for the "success" of the evolving soul in humanity. Besides, to quote Sri Aurobindo, "why should the Divine be tied down to succeed in all his operations, it does not make him less omnipotent. His self-limitation is itself an act of omnipotence." Only omnipotence can descend in the horror of death and falsehood. Therefore, He

"Must descend into clay

And the burden of earthly nature bear,

And tread the dolorous way."³⁶

Alas! "Men tolerate," the Mother, says "the presence of the Divine upon earth only on condition that He suffers there," therefore since the world began, "the hate of hell and human spite" is his "meed." Jesus proclaimed through his life a teaching and a compelling message of hope and assurance. Jesus introduced to us a new chapter in Semitic religious history. There is something extraordinary, something refreshingly striking in his contribution, which has made religion in the west to flow into new channels of spirituality, transcending the sphere of law and commandments of time-worn religions: Law and commandments relate man to parochial and temporal interests; they are as stones to a hungry man as the New Testament puts it. Jesus proclaimed a religion of wide and deep horizon of God's intimacy with man with love as the bond between both. We have simply to 'knock' and pray for "the kingdom of Heaven" is "within" us that alone can make man "perfect, as the Father in Heaven is perfect." Thus the Avatar of Sorrow had to come first to show how to take up one's cross by denying the local self in order to pave way for the real Self, evolving in humanity. Now, for the advent of the Avatar of divine joy; the light of 'dharma' as symbolized in the Lamb has to become Tiger the divinised Vital force for the "necessity of his return with a sword of God into a world that has rejected him" and—

"Invading Matter with the spirit's ray

Awaking its silence to immortal thoughts

Awaking the dumb-heart to the living word."

It is not easy for ordinary people to understand the depths of a divine incarnation's personality; because His birth is divine, His work too is divine "Janma karma ca me diviyam," as the Gita puts it. And this difficulty of recognizing an incarnation has been well expressed by Sri Krsna in the ninth chapter. Only a few can understand him and take refuge in him to arrive at his nature and status of being, "madbhavam" in Radha-bhava." Thus alone we shall understand the phenomenon of Avatarhood in "its proper place in the whole scheme of the world manifestation." The rest will deride him or just ignore him: "Deluded minds despise Me lodged in the human body, not being able to grasp my transcendent nature as the supreme Lord of all beings" (9:11) Sri Krishna, the Omnipotent in the house of flesh, manifesting in human form as a Man speaking to men is a step to the supreme mystery of all, "rahasyam uttamam" and "not an isolated and miraculous phenomenon" of a dogmatic or superstitious thinking. Eternal Avatar Sri Krishna is shaping principle of the soul's evolution out of matter, life and mind towards the subsequent "ascent beyond mental man into spiritual and supramental being."³⁷ Sri Krishna, the Mother-Master Omniscient Ecstasy descends as the eternal Avatar so that in his human portion we become divine, rise into the divine nature and consciousness "madbhavam," to shape ourselves,

".... closer to an image of God,
A little nearer the Idea divine."³⁸

After all who else save Sri Krishna, the Omnipotent in this house of flesh can lead Bharatvarsha which is an attitude of the spirit, His experimental Laboratory in which He has perfected "Brahma Vidya" the spiritual science for the spiritual evolution of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" i.e. humanity and global brotherhood. This birth of God in humanity—God becoming Man, and man being divinised is the supreme mystery, "rahasyam uttamam."

The eternal Avatar has yet to "untie the cosmic knot" in which is entangled Love ('one word too often profaned') in the tangled boughs of gigantic tree of triple creation of Mind-Life-Matter complex. The Mayavic illusion of snake in the rope of Reality is bereft of the power to untie the cosmic knot. It turns tail in the Nirvanic escape that complicates the issue. It leaves earth and life to be ruled by the sons of Darkness a plaything

in the hands of ruthless and unregenerate powers of the lower Nature that make puppets of the fallen humanity. The otherworldly attitude of happiness or reward in some remote Heaven too is no solution to the earth's tragedy. It only gives up the battle of life in disgust and defeat. This cannot perfect life on the Earth and justify meaning of the Avatar as an evolutionary impetus to perfect body, life and mind with the perfection of the soul that is the delegate of Eternity. Besides, God being the intense Enjoyer of the supreme sacrifice, which is the creation, is not an escapist but a great worker, the supreme scientist working with His "logic of Infinite" to remould the Earth in Heaven's image and unite the two extremes in a perfect wedlock. The preparation of previous Avatars has brought humanity to the present stage of transition, and it has become imperative for the curve of evolution to take a "new turn of seeking" to exceed the past glimmering dawns and land into the dazzling noons of the future. Naturally, to fulfil and perfect the work and knowledge of the previous Avatars, "there has to be correction by Kalki" the supramental Avatar to fulfil in power all that was left incomplete by the previous Incarnations. Therefore:

"God must be born on earth and be a man,
That man being human may grow even as God."

As such,

"He who would save the world must be one with the world,
All suffering things contain in his heart's space—
And bear the grief and joy of all that lives."³⁹

The last Avatar Kalki has to lead the future course of evolution as the Leader of the way for the subsequent earth nature's supreme consummation. For He as observes V. Reddy, "is the Avatar of earth's transformation and utter fulfilment of human destiny."⁴⁰ In the law of new manifestation, the old order must give place to a new divine mould; the idea of "mukti" of the soul must embrace the salvation of the body, by transfusing spiritual substance into the mentalized living matter, to rematerialize body into super-matter and liberate it from age, decay and weakness. This reversal of the old order is what Nietzsche calls "all too human." It is a Herculean task for the Avatar to sweep out the "refuse

of the Indian past and the European present"⁴¹ by meeting effectively the threat of "brutal Materialism and chaotic vitalism." The attempt of the European materialistic civilization at "churning Matter" with "externalized intellect and life endeavour" has failed in the discovery of the "truth of material existence."⁴² Instead, it has only churned out poison of collective unconsciousness that it shall be compelled to swallow, as it has no faith in Shiva, the Eternal who alone can change poison into nectar.

This is an age of human predicament. The crisis of this age of rush and anxiety has released gadding infra-vital passions and the number of "apparently mad" is increasing. This upsurge of hostile powers are tenaciously insistent to thwart the onrush of the coming force by inciting in human beings the inhuman hunger for sex, belly-cheer and material possessions. Consequently, this dreadful phase of material civilization that puts matter and physical life in forefront must fret and fume till it reaches the fag end of its life. The spiritually displaced and culturally uprooted humanity has nothing to console and sustain when rains fall and storms thunder. Mankind, today is at the crossroads. It is "stricken with helplessness" to use Shaw's words, confronting a "system that it can neither understand nor have power to control it." The cataclysmic nature of the age of confusion (Kaliyuga) has sown the seeds of disintegration, collapse and ruin. The present crisis is similar to the past successive periods of transition when anarchy, violence, hatred, greed etc forced mankind to pass through a dreadful nightmare of mortification, pain, bloodshed and destruction. Do not these signs predict that the "great Avatar of all arrives to establish the first Satya Yuga of the Kali,"⁴³ as every Satya Yuga has its Kali, so does "each Kali prepare its satya."⁴⁴ And, "Kali is the age for destruction and rebirth," because a desperate clinging to the old that can no longer be saved." As the world does not mend itself quickly and the "broom is not always sufficient," therefore the warrior mood of the God foreshadowed by the prevailing confusion and violence is like

".... Tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!"

The intervention of God as God is the "working of a Force come

specifically in the midst of world-circumstances, a weapon of flame and light hurled into the earthly fray—even like the discus of Vishnu—and having accomplished its mission, going back into the hand of the thrower, its fount and origin.”⁴⁵ The ‘hour’ of God, fierce and terrible for the sons of Darkness, is not so for the men of faith who are of the Divine and for the Divine. The ‘hour’ becomes a blessing in disguise if they waver not in their sacred trust. As such

“Whatever the appearance we must bear
 Whatever our strong ills and present fate
 When nothing we can see but drift and bale,
 A mighty guidance leads us still through all.”

—Savitri.

Sri Aurobindo, the “modern Avatar” with his supramental consciousness has begun the work of drilling matter and life to make them transparent to receive the “superconscient beam” of truth-consciousness for inaugurating the “Age of a New consciousness.” Man may be the crown of creation, yet he has miles to go, as he is not what he ought to be. Wrapped in mortal poverty he is caught in the whirl of a ceaseless flux, discontented, confused, bewildered and gripped in an identity crisis. By calling himself Brahmin, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, and Shudra, the crisis has intensified to make man an easy prey to the fast resurging forces of the “barbaric brutality and violence of a half-animal vital nature.” At this juncture of crisis, the intervention to recover the lost balance would be in response to the winged voice of the suffering Earth that rises up to call down the Force to intervene and infuse fresh life to the “grandiose dream of which the world is made.”⁴⁶ The Avatarhood as a “parable of evolution” has a wider range, a deeper implication than the biological and intellectual. Along with the mental evolution there has to be the spiritual and the supramental evolution of man. The Divine in the description of Sri Aurobindo, has a way to manipulate the “pressure of contraries” for spiritualizing Matter and fulfilling, thereby some “secret intention” in the creation of the material universe. In the revealing words of Sri Aurobindo, the outer changes may lead to “such conditions that the sword of Kalki can alone purify the earth from the burden of an obstinately Asuric humanity. The choice lies with the race itself, for as

it sows so shall it reap the fruit of its Karma."⁴⁷ In the meantime, the lurking prophetic words of Yeats remind us that:

"Surely some revelation is at hand,
Surely the second coming is at hand
The second coming."

The struggle of Mahabharata, the Great India—of which Krishna is the central figure—has not yet consummated in the victory of the Divine to usher the rule of righteous in the world. Purshottama, the Supreme person of whom all Avatars are the human births is a "dark-robed labourer in the cosmic scheme" materializing the "inevitable idea," executing slowly but assuredly the "dumb intention of the unconscious gulfs." As the world has not yet paid the debt to Rudra; therefore there are ample grounds for Kurukshetra of shattering dimensions to be enacted on a global scale. The resistance of the forces of the infernal regions to the descending light, unrighteousness, perversion, darkness, vileness, discord, narrowness, bigotry, bondage, division that rule the roast hasten the 'hour' of God and call for the flaming sword. These anti-divine forces are hell-bent to tear off the wrap and woof of human civilization. The Divine in man shall be compelled by the world-conditions to take cudgels with the forces of death and disintegration and fulfill his promise that:

" I shall rise; I shall rise in the fire of mighty rage,
I shall burn the enemies and spread abroad,
Equality, Truth and Love in the world."

Sri Aurobindo, the expanding Krishna-Consciousness is the Avatar of the future, who has brought down the seeds of Truth-light to be fertilized in the earth-consciousness. His return "like a burning comet" is certain, as he is to lead the ascent of evolution beyond mental into spiritual and supramental evolution. He has built the "golden tower" and the "flame child is born." His giving up of body deliberately like his birth on August 15 is "phenomenon of intervention a great decisive event in view of the work to be done."⁴⁸ Being the Avatar of the supermind, he has "brought down the supramental force into the earth consciousness."⁴⁹ The bodies of Mother-Master in 'Samadhi' lay charged with "a new consciousness and power" as the seeds of the golden buds ready to burst their heart and make way for the golden harvest of a "new race." The 'Samadhi'

under the service tree in Pondicherry is a witness to this miracle. Sri Aurobindo-Mira, the Divine with His yogamaya, though behind the veil are yet close to the earth's atmosphere, stationed in the subtle-physical body of each being, helping the growth and expansion of the psychic being directing the "work begun to be completed."⁵⁰

The birth of Sri Aurobindo like endless Vedic Dawns burst open the heart of darkness to make way for the "deputy of the aspiring world" heralding the advent of the golden creation. The momentous importance of his birth on August 15, the day of India's liberation is also suggestive of this new world order towards which humanity marches. It puts the Divine's "sanction and seal" on the task of the Master by opening a "new age" for the whole world. Likewise, his passing away (as mentioned earlier) is an intervention in another dimension, as Nolini Kanta puts it, a decisive step of the Avatar, "to move out of the material scene and take his station in the background from where he could move and direct things effectively."⁵¹ This force in operation is unlike saints and prophets, as it does not depend on the strength of eloquent preaching or gathering masses to raise a church and a new religion founded on a single book revolving around a single person. The three necessary elements that condition and determine the work of the Avatar like the Buddha and the Christ are what the Avatar represents and establishes in the consciousness of humanity. In case of Buddhism, it is the dharma, the Sangha, the Buddha, and in Christianity: the law of Christian living, the Church and the Christ. But the yoga of Sri Aurobindo founded on the teaching of the Gita, is more catholic and complex than other specialized teachings and disciplines. In it, these three things assume a larger meaning. Here, the idea of the 'Sangha' or divine fellowship is all humanity. And the human solidarity or the broad-based humanity does not mean mere humanitarianism, charity, benevolence or service to mankind. The true humanity is reached by pushing it farther into Divinity. So, the unity here is the "all embracing unity" that makes one realize; "all is in Myself and Myself in all and I am One with all beings." The Dharma is the law enabling us to take up all human relations into higher divine meaning. The Dharma liberates us into desirelessness; our life becomes the God-governed action rooted in God-knowledge and self-knowledge.

According to the Master, the real Sangha or divine fellowship is all

humanity. It is a perennial stream of God-seeking Life sustained by mutual aid and propelled through love and adoration to march towards the sea of Bliss. The world is moving towards this. "It is My path," says Sri Krishna, "that men follow in every way" according to one's nature and capacity. Therefore, man lives for the one Self in humanity for God in all beings. It is to act for 'lokasamgraha' i.e. to live in the life of humanity. Sri Krishna lays no exclusive stress on a single form of worship or one form of his human birth. Krishna represents the Divine, the Purushottama of whom all Avatars are the human births, and of whom all forms and names of the Godhead worshipped by men are the figures. Sri Aurobindo explains that, "it is one that is inclusive of all paths and not exclusive. For the Divine takes up into his universality all Avatars and all teachings and all dharmas."⁵² Those who love can taste the inner fruit of Avatar's coming; taking refuge in Him, they understand the true nature of the divine birth and participate in the divine works. Growing full of Him in their consciousness, "manmaya mam upasritah," they became "madbhavam" i.e. attain to the divine being and divine nature.

The aim and purpose of the divine descent or the Avatar in the outer human life of the earth is to awaken the eternal Avatar within the inner life of all beings. Its symbolic gesture is the red-lotus of Sri Aurobindo made dynamic and operative with the white passion of the white lotus of the Mother. The avataric role of the Master radically perfects the work of previous Avatars by reversing gear of Buddha's negative realization and Shankara's Vedanta of Mayavad that superimposes a shadow of snake on the rope of reality. He is to us the "avatar of the New Age," in whom Rabindra Nath Tagore visioned "the soul incarnate of India in the crisis of its destiny." In the fourfold syllabic length of the Word Aurobindo is condensed the fourfold vision of the Divine, his Avataric role of perfecting and fulfilling the fourfold personality of man in a creative order of collective social living. While man grows and rises to this degree of this perfection, the principles of Love, Knowledge, Power, Perfection shall organize the soul, mind, life and body into an integral personality in which the soul manifests as the true and pure love, mind that of infallible knowledge, the vital manifesting invincible power and strength through the body of perfect beauty and perfect harmony.

The avataric role of Sri Aurobindo radically revolutionized the stagnant mind of India that "had been dedicated to ecstatic contemplation for the

last twenty-five hundred years."⁵³ He brought the "armed revolution" to his yoga, seeking "independence" right down into his body. He galvanized masses with the spirit of Nationalism that stretches its arms to embrace universe. He radiated the light of his Conscious-Force in the global life for the unification of the world; jolting out of ignorance the European thinkers, the scientists of material monism to cast a new up-look beyond surface phenomena and acquire simultaneously a deep "in-look" on Nature to see her an infinite teleological and discriminative Force of Intelligence. The life of the wailing and groaning Earth would have been a tale told by an idiot if it were the product of a mechanical process of dead Matter to signify nothing. "Therefore," writes Sri Aurobindo "were the ancient Rishis able to see what now we are beginning again to glimpse dimly that not only is Nature herself an infinite teleological and discriminative impersonal Force of Intelligence or consciousness (that went forth in the beginning...) but that God dwells within and over Nature as infinite universal Personality, universal in the universe, individualized as well as universal in the particular form, or self-consciousness who perceives, enjoys and conducts to their end its vast and complex working."⁵⁴

As such;

"Earth is the chosen place of mightiest souls,
Earth is the heroic spirit's battlefield,
To forge where the Arch-mason shapes his work."

— Savitri

Sri Aurobindo's leading the evolution of consciousness towards the next step of the supramental transformation of life and earth is a Herculean task as every step forward is a battle against the backward and downward reactionary forces, which make for evil, ignorance and darkness. This is a perpetual battle and struggle between the "sons of Light and undivided Infinity and the children of Darkness and Division." In the Biblical image this is typified in the contest of God and his angels and Satan and his demons for the "possession of human life and human soul." The Master in the nightmarish spell of World War II fought this battle. It was an invasion of the asuric forces trying to grip the earth and pull humanity into oblivion of the Dark Age. Sri Aurobindo, to quote Nolini Kanta "opposed that onrush with his will and divine strength."

He broke the hostile downward speeding force by taking it into himself even like God Shiva who swallowed poison and harboured it in his throat to release immortality for Gods. The subtle attack left in him a bruised body and to man a saved world."⁵⁵ In order to destroy the asuric forces in their hiding place from where they precipitate into the earth's atmosphere; it was necessary for the Master to shift the scene of the action, cut off the link with the old evolutionary order, bury the body charged with golden light in samadhi and enter the arena of battle filed. Sri Aurobindo's willing departure, sudden and unexpected in 1950, was not like sanyasis or yogis losing themselves in the Absolute Silence or entrance into Nothingness; but a daring leap of the "eternal warrior" into the battlefield to confront the Hostiles in their stronghold.

Time is drawing near; when the curtain of mystery rolls up and lo! The Mother's "timeless self" Kalki, the "Modern Avatar" of Nirodbaran appears in His supramental form, in a supramental way to change each "normal act" into a "miracle." The will that has established itself, the power Divine that has touched the earth has not ended the play, "Christ and Buddha have come and gone but it is Rudra who still holds the world in the hollow of his hand." The law of Love to rule global consciousness is a thing that cannot be achieved without liquidating the debt of the fierce and terrible Rudra, which is in the form of the destruction of the "powers that are profiteers of egoistic force and their servants" tormenting and oppressing mankind. The "fierce forward labour" of miserable humanity "cries for the sword of the Hero" to enact the culminating stroke of the divine drama. As such,

"A date is fixed in the calendar of the Unknown,
for the celebration of
An anniversary of the Birth sublime."

Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethena), the clear Ray of Mother-Master consciousness, regards Sri Aurobindo "Kalki," the last Avatar of Hindu tradition, working behind the curtain that is becoming thinner and thinner. Just "one day more" in the calendar of the Divine for the world to see;

"The galloping hoofs of the unforeseen event,
Bearing the superhuman rider near."

The galloping "while-winged horse," bearing the Avatar with a flaming sword and entering the earth atmosphere to pay the "debt to Rudra" is an evolutionary need, a necessary step in the evolving consciousness; otherwise, humanity remains for ever "prey of the minutes and the hours."⁵⁶ The image of white-winged horse, a symbol of purified divine vital energy as represented by Aswapati in 'Savitri,' "perhaps" writes Amal Kiran, "is the same symbolic horse that arrives at the end of India's spiritual history as that which at its beginning the Vedic Rishis visioned as galloping ever towards the Dawn—Dadhikravan, image of the purified and mastered Life-Force moving with the Immortal Light of Truth in his heart and eyes."⁵⁷

The "Lord of the Horse" is the Avataric power embodied in Mother-Master consciousness. It is working out all that for which it stood. However, impossible the conditions, hazardous the vicissitudes of Nature; Lord's promise of the future is going to be fulfilled and

"Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
The spirit shall take up the human play,
The earthly life becomes the life divine."

—Savitri

The mighty work of transformation of the earthly life into life divine is the "God's labour" as taken up by Sri Aurobindo and with his plunge into the mud and mire, he prepared a "bed for the golden river's song." It shall "one day" consummate in success. Despite doubt, disbelief and falsifying calculations of the "wise men" God is growing amidst the clanging noise of clashing armies. The curtain is slowly but steadily being rolled up, and eventually it is to reveal what it conceals. Just "one day" more the dark mystery of the growth of the "flame child" in its "golden tower" shall become an illumined reality with its "ecstasies seven," a "miracle of eternal beauty" revealing the magic-mystery of the play of the eternal Avatar promising:

"One day I will return a bringer of light,
Then I will give to you a mirror of God,
Then hate shall dwell no more in human heart,
And fear and weakness shall desert men's lives."

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Chapter - VI

SAT GURU BABA NANAK: A UNIQUE BLEND OF SPIRITUALITY AND SECULARISM

This noble land or Aryavarta—of which the great Manu speaks of Brahmavarta—had to bear her bosom to every onslaught of the outer barbarians. In the long history of India, covering nearly five millenniums we find her coming into the grips of contrasting and extreme situations, which made her cow-down, waver and sink into the periods of gloom, tragedy and defeat. Wave after wave of barbarian conquests subjugated the land; made her the most suffering of all lands of the world; so much so that Indians often must have felt that the very moment would be the last if some miraculous hand did not come to their rescue.

The periods from 1200 to 1560 A.D.—extending from the establishment of the Muslim kingdom in Delhi, to the rise of Mughal empire of Akbar was such a period in the evolution of Nation introducing the nerve-shattering problem of the Islamic conquest; the problem that in the worlds of Sri Aurobindo was more than that of "subjection to a foreign rule and ability to recover freedom." The problem of receiving Islam gave rise to the "struggle between two civilizations; one ancient and indigenous, the other mediaeval and brought from outside."¹ The problem of assimilation of Islam in the main stream of national culture—like criss-cross currents of two extremes—have since then laid heavy on the heart of the nation and could not be streamlined till date. "That which rendered the problem insoluble," Sri Aurobindo writes, "was the attachment of each to a powerful religion, the one militant and aggressive, the other spiritually tolerant indeed and flexible, but obstinately faithful in its discipline to its own principle and standing on the defense behind a barrier of social forms."²

The political conquest by the Mughal ushered a period of disintegration, spiritual sickness, social upheaval, untold atrocities and exploitation of the people. Discrimination became rampant and large-scale conversion to Islam was achieved on the point of sword. At this juncture, some power, other than political or military violence and despotism was needed to heal the bleeding wounds of suffering masses to resolve the crises and make for peace. Akbar, on the Musluman side tried to resolve the crisis with a type of political patriotism of eclectic religion. Nonetheless, observes Sri Aurobindo Akbar's "religion was an intellectual and political rather than spiritual creation and had never any chance of assent from the strongly religious mind of the two communities."³ It was on the Hindu side; Nanak attempted the solution on the universal principle of "ēko noo. se sab jag upjo." Had not Guru's universal religion of India's ancient tradition misconstrued, perverted by the later generations, smothering it within the walls of community cult and custom; it would have risen to a greater spiritual light reconciling different warring communities. By reducing Nanak-Consciousness to a creed of a particular sect, we have done a great damage to that universality that belongs to all and is not a monopoly of a single group or community.

It was the call of Earth caught in critical and gruesome conditions that had brought down the light of Sat Guru to give a new impetus to the spirit of the age. The Flame descended in November 1969 and Nanak was born in Talvandi, a village on the banks of Ravi, some thirty-five miles from Lahore. Nanak's earlier leanings towards religion, his long spells of mediation, spending larger part of the day in forests; reveal his missionary life with the purpose that nothing could stop it from execution. The deliberate pressures of his father to employ him in agriculture, trading, shop keeping and last of all, to entangle him in the tangles of marriage could not deter the flaming soul of the Master and alter the colour of his God-intoxicated consciousness. In Sat Guru Baba Nanak, we glimpse again the birth of an ancient yogi with half-closed eyes, lost in the contemplation of the Infinite like Shiva or Buddha; restraining life-energies, mind-stuff and senses within the nine portals of the body, to gain access to the tenth door leading to the house of 'thy Father,' where ceaseless music resounds day and night.

Soon, the Master left home, became a wandering monk, an international Fakir, with sky his roof, the earth bed and food; but no home to bind and

no food or drink to taint his noble soul. Out of his seventy years, Baba Nanak spent about thirty years in traveling. He traveled about 50,000 miles through nooks and corners—not only of India—but also of Mecca, Madina, Turkey, Cylon, Tibet, Baghdad, Kabul and even China. On his return after peregrination of Islamic shrines of Mecca and Baghdad, spreading the light of the Word, he strived with a missionary zeal to bridge the widening gulf of religious intolerance between the ruler Islam and the ruled Hindustani. Baba Nanak encountered near the village Saidpur, Baber's troops in 1521, mercilessly routing Ibrahim Lodi's armies. The Hindustani walls of elephants and infantry were no match for Babar's guns, used first time in India. The barbarity of burning and killing and decimation of Hindustanis made Baba cry in agony and pain. He offered himself and his Muslim ministerial Bhai Mardana's arrest for the fire to be extinguished. At that time, Baba Nanak's heart-rending cry to the Maker, which is now a part of the Sikh Bible—for mercy and invocation to raise out of the ruins of the contemporary situation the charismatic form of Rashtreyata, Qaumeyat or Nationhood carries a ring of glory yet to be materialized. It reads as under:

“O Lord! Thou owned Khurasaam

And pestilised Hindustan;

Thou taketh no blame for sending

Babur-a Death Demon.

Such was the intensity of beating and bemoaning

Thou hath felt no compunction?

O Creation! Thou art for all

If the hard hiteth the hard

I grieve at it naught—

I have no complaint.

But when the lion mauleth the kind herd,

O Lord! The cowherd

Standeth for answer...”

Encircled by miseries and suffering of people, Sat Guru perceived that the irruption of the Mohammedan people aggressively propagating their different religion and social culture, is creating rift in the existing social

structure and ancient spiritual religion which is being disfigured by the overloaded ritual fuss and ceremonial tangles. Baba Nanak, the offshoot of the ancient civilization like the great religious personalities was a radical and revolutionary to stand at the head to govern and lead the castigated people falsifying the spirit of religion with their cobwebs of rituals and ceremonials. Nanak was himself a striking and continuous roll call of that greatness for which India stands. Knowing that the letter kills and spirit saves, Baba Nanak saw the only alternative to thwart the cultural and religious onslaught was to kindle the flames of the mystic Word and bridge the fissure by accepting and assimilating all that was noble in the different cultures. Thus could the apparent separateness be dissolved, differences made up and harmonized in the mystery of unity and the joy of identity. Nanak is such a characteristic turn of the inner religious mind of India that displays the power of absorbing in one's consciousness all that is grand and noble in everything. He took the Islamic worship of the timeless One experienced it as Para Brahma parmeshwar, a living presence, deathless and divine, though beyond universe, yet holding countless forms in Itself without being limited and defined by any book or person. Baba revealed this truth of Existence to the person, who objected Baba's sleeping with his feet towards Mecca. When the person removed his feet towards other direction or any direction, lo! To the surprise of all, Mecca revolved towards all directions giving testimony to the truth that God is not a single monotone and his temple is not fixed anywhere in a image of creed; but the whole universe itself is the temple in which His Centre is everywhere but circumference no where. In his own way, Sat Guru made a heroic attempt to discover universality in Islam; a tendency of human soul towards mingling of hearts by influencing each other with all that is best in different religions. In fact, Nanak-Consciousness stands for an emergence of global sense in man. Baba's universal comprehension does not bind God to any prophet or a book, for it is his transcendence that all prophets and books sing and glorify; yet fail to limit or describe says Nanak,

"His devotees singing His praise have sunk in silence,
And so have the Vedas, the Puranas and the learned."

Sat Guru's vision found true Islam (not what people worship here and propagate with fanatic zeal) the religion of supreme transcendence, a state of absolute calm and peace or "entering peace," and this is the greatest!

'Lesson' which is embodied as the Koran for the followers to diffuse in the world through their acts and behaviour. This principle of harmony lays down the foundation of universal brotherhood. The time's demand was that Sat-Guru launch rigorous verbal attack on all that was wrong in both religions and all that were narrow, one-sided and prejudiced. He warbled forth the woodnotes of the Infinite, singing of one God and one Humanity. He pointed that the real worth of man is not in what he is outwardly as his birth or status; but what he becomes and what he is inwardly. Baba Nanak preached without discrimination, the same thing to every audience. He belonged to all communities and was virtually man of masses, "a man speaking to men" to use Wordsworth's phraseology. Baba wanted all men of sense to open their eyes, give up blind acceptance of the words of pundits and maulvis bereft of the spirit that elevates and saves. Words without life to breathe and invigorate are sapless like dry autumn leaves fallen from the life-giving tree. Baba pointed out that external show of reverence or worship, tinged with selfishness, greed and desire is not Religion. It is a self-deception; an effort of the egoistic consciousness to worship the God of one's desire by throwing dust into the eyes of God that is never possible. It recoils and eventually we are blinded ourselves. "True religious life," according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, "must express itself in love and aim at the unity of mankind. Bead necklaces, rosaries, triple-point on forehead or putting on ashes, pilgrimage, baths in holy rivers, meditation, or image worship do not purify a man as service of fellow creatures does."⁴

Baba Nanak worked to put an end to inequality, injustice, fanaticism and rigid adherence to a book or worship of the image at the cost of a living presence within. He wanted to put an end to such malpractices that had plagued Indian society for a long time. Therefore, he exhorted people to cultivate religious liberality as opposed to dogmatic religiosity. Baba's spiritually secular vision, aimed at social re-organization on the notions of equality and brotherhood, which negated the possibility of any kind of discrimination on the basis of caste, colour and creed. In a way, Baba was the harbinger of a cultural renaissance, that could have widened into a global society; had not his teaching been manipulated to breed a sect of papal religion, narrowed down to mere mumbling, and muttering of words in place of true inner spiritual seeking that Baba Nanak insisted with a vehemence of a divine force. Sat Guru's transmitted truth of Word got diluted and perverted by the mixture of the unregenerate human

ignorance. The religion in its origin and essence does not remain the same when humanity adapts it to actual life. After the personal vivifying example of the Prophet is no more present; as the living truth, the revelation is turned by the followers into fixed beliefs, set dogmas and rigid cults. "This has been," writes Kishor Gandhi, "the invariable fate of all the great spiritual revelations brought upon earth by beings whom the world adores as Incarnations and Prophets. They are the fountain-heads of great spiritual influxes into the life of humanity but sooner or later the streams they release get choked in the sands of human life or polluted in the dark muddy pits of human egoism."⁵ Truths revealed by Gurus, Prophets and Sages are seized by the human ego for commercialization; exploited by power-mongering politician and Pir-Pandit to bind its adherents with "inviolable" rules and regulations and "punishments for those that revolt or go astray, for the heretic and the renegade."⁶ It is thus the "streams" of Knowledge-Truth-Bliss, which the Gurus and Sages brought upon earth "get choked," soiled and mixed.

Sat Guru, at heart was a divine democrat, a man of masses with a universal perspective of one God and one Humanity. As such, he didn't come to destroy anything true, noble and venerable in the tradition, and to propagate a new religion of personality cult. In a way every sage is a revolutionary by nature, destroying all that is lifeless, futile and not in tune with the spirit of the age. Nanak carried forward the light of the great "forefathers" by rejecting corrupt forms of worship, rituals of sacrifice, ceremonial deviations of selfish minds present in each community. These minds of evil brood tenaciously safeguard their evil designs to befool, deceive and delude the minds of ignorant, illiterate and poor masses that need economic stability and peace more than the admonishing words of pandits and molvis. The "gentle Nanak," followed the footsteps of those who loved God and thus demonstrated that the great truth, the eternal law of Nature: Unity in diversity, sameness in difference and identity in separateness, is to be experienced and lived in our individual and social life. In him we have a unique blend of spirituality and secularity in the real sense. Like his teacher Kutubuddin, Nanak was a Sufi enamoured by the high Vedantic spirituality as renewed and relived in the poetry of Kabir Surdas and others. His outstretched arms of infinite compassion embraced Hindus and Mohammedans alike. There are some elements in his teaching that resemble the thought of Kabir and other religious thinkers; yet much of

his sabada-shakti is unique as his personality. Like Kabir he laughed at the external ornaments to be an inseparable part of religious practice. And, like Kabir communicated his teaching to the poor and backward sections of society, since he believed as Swami Vivekananda too believed that God resides where those who are capable of such service tend to these poor, helpless and sick.

The word "Nanak" means fire, the ancient flame of Agani; the descending Sabda-Shakti into the physical consciousness to kindle the sparks of wisdom in the density of earth's ignorance for the germination of a new age of consciousness. The belief in karma, transmigration of soul, Guru Bhakti, emotional worship and service of God; His immense transcendence—all these had been emphasised in the Vedas, Upanishads, Gita, Puranas, Saints and Sages of India. Sat Guru Baba Nanak invested these truths a new life and purpose to meet the challenges of the age. He communicated these truths in a simple, unostentatious language that enter into men's business and bosom and settle there to create a new understanding and perspective. Sat Guru arrived at a time of spiritual crises when Hinduism was in shambles and people were sunk in fear and helplessness. The purpose of living was overshadowed by dark obscurities of orthodoxies and the otherworldly attitudes of the prevailing religious sects. These touch-me-not religious communities had narrowed the wide and ample spirituality to the cloistered life of the monasteries. They had turned the perennial spiritual culture a far away atmosphere, remote and cut off from the ties of family and society, to be realized in the mountain caves after severing all responsibilities of the life and the world.

In the era, when the extreme elaboration of ritual had driven people away from the true religion, Sat Guru moved and lived like a lotus in the mud and mire of world's ignorance and falsehood; singing of the Sabda or the nectar Sweet-Word, the audible 'nada' of the universe:

"O Nanak, that endless Word,
Is reverberating in each heart."

In tune with the infinite Word Sat Guru was among us, working as a labourer, a farmer, a shopkeeper, a government servant, sweating side by side with his mates, lest they might not feel he was outside them.

They too responded to his call by embodying the truth of guru-consciousness in their lives and social behaviour. The Word-intoxicated Sat Guru opened their eyes to the treasure house of all virtues. Says Nanak—

“By communion with the Word,

One becomes the abode of all virtues.

One becomes a Sheikh and a true spiritual king.”

Baba Nanak wanted us to understand that it is only by living together in mutual love and affection, upholding righteousness in thought and deed; we shall be able to end evil and hatred, uproot injustice and repression in public life. To the spiritual temper of the Land, Guru (GU+RU means: the destroyer of darkness) is not a body of flesh that decays and dies but an embodied Truth-Word, realized and lived as the Transcendence that contains universe, and is at the same time personal, intimate as the eternal companion of the soul, the father-mother Omnipotent God. In Sat Guru, the triple principles of creation—Brahma, Vishnu, and Rudra are harmonized as one composite supreme Person. So says Nanak:

“He is Shiva, He is Vishnu and He is Brahma

And their consorts Parvati, Lakshmi

And Saraswati also.”

In the divine secularism, the One Reality, “Ekam Sat” is realised variously. The myriad names are the glimmerings of the White radiance of the Word breaking into many-coloured dome of phenomenal existence. And,

“O Nanak, one knows the True One as immanent in all.”

Sat Guru wanted man to chisel himself into the divine image; see humanity prevail once again in place of inhuman cruelty and animalism disguised in the cloak of religion. Rising above communal and religious barriers, Baba made us discern another dimension of our existence in addition to our material, vital, mental and social life. Without this the collective existence of sameness in difference, identity in separateness could not function to evolve into a spiritualized secular order of the Nation. In this spiritual dimension, the basis of secularism binds

individual with society and society with nation and nationalism emerges into a global brotherhood. In this brotherhood we come out of our narrow communal life, forget that we are Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and become aware that we are the children of Allah; the sparks of the Divine with different aspirations and aptitudes as plants in the garden of the universe.

Sat Guru pointed out that quarrels over lifeless religious dogmas are futile. It betrays our stupidity and leads nowhere. For him, the Quran and the Puranas teach the worship of "Ekām Sat," the Satnaam, in which there is no division, no fear and no enmity. Alas! Under the spell of "maia mohi" people are deluded and discern not 'sagar mahi bund, bund mahi sagar,' the 'drop in the sea and sea in the drop.' It is Sabada-Shakti, the creative power or the Conscious-force of the One that is worshipped differently through different languages in Temples, Mosques, and Churches alike. Therefore, sings Baba Nanak:

"Inīmaia jagu mohia

Virla bujhai koi."

It is the inscrutable Power or Maya of That, with which He wills to self-multiply Himself as the countless forms of the universe. It is His Will that emanates all forms "hukmi hovani akar." All forms of the universe are formed out of the same clay "matī" or matter, the form and stuff of spirit-consciousness, and so -

'Sabh mahi joti, joti hai soi'

And without that 'joti' nothing can come into existence or exist for

'Tis dai chānani sabh mahi chānanu hoi.'

This all absoluteness is pure delight, the 'rasa' and the self-expression of the Absolute as the countless forms of the universe, the unity in diversity, "Jal te tarang tarang te hai jalu." This is the primordial rhythm, sustaining and directing the creative play towards consummation on a global level. When our minds are suffused with this 'tarang' or rhythm, the inner ear opens and the Sabda resounds: "runjhun kare ram." All fetters fall down, duality and difference vanish for ever, the creature and creation become two sides of the same Reality, and in tears of joy we sing: "ape rasia ape rasu" and "apahi gavai apahi nāchai api bajavai tura." Thus we are graced with a vision of the 'virat purusha' in the

person of Sat Guru containing all castes and groups, sects and fragments in the arms of omniscient ecstasy, and "Jah jah dekha tah tah soi," wherever I turn my eyes, I see Him and Him alone. It is, sings Swami Rama:

"The same that works thy eyes and hands
The same doth move what by thee stands,
The one within is all without,
That one does bring what comes about.
No foreign force, no foe, no other
Exists by thee whatever..."

Sat Guru like other divine interventions had come to purify, elevate and establish the glory of the eternal Religion of humanity that binds, unites, and joins man, Nature and God in a single embrace of unfathomable relationship and love. Alas! The superficial human look is liable to err in the darkness of ignorance by superimposing appearance of snake on the rope of reality. This skin-deep consciousness cannot delve deep into the sea-depths of 'Sabda' to experience its mystic-blaze, as (in the famous proverb of the Bible); "It is easier for a camel to pass through the needle's eye than for a rich man to pass through the gates of heaven."

God-intoxicated Baba with his immortal smile radiated light and love of the divine presence, in which, the shadow of difference or separation in Aum-Allah disappears like clouds before the Sun. Aum-Allah are the aspects of the same Reality as Bhalla-Maradana are part and parcel of Sat Guru consciousness. Baba Nanak's Self is a practical illustration of this harmony or synthesis of two divergent civilizations. Baba wanted us to realize that knowledge cannot be divided against itself and, truth must be regarded as one and whole. Moreover, the end of all religious discipline is to give us an insight into Reality; therefore, it does not matter if we practice this discipline or that. What matters is our sincere pursuit of truth, our thirst for knowledge that liberates and love that unites. In the experience of Baba Nanak, the Upanishadic Transcendent is the unmanifest Brahman-Khuda; who is both with qualities 'anant guni,' and without qualities, and in whom, "unity become plurality, and plurality becomes unity." In the ecstatic vision of Baba there is no fissure or duality in Sankaracharya's advait (non-dualism), and Ramanuja's Visistadvaita

(qualified non-dualism). They are two aspects of Sabda-Brahma. The verse of "Sukhmani Sahib" aptly unites form and formless in a single embrace:

"Nirguna api sargunu bhi ohi

Kala dhari jini sagali mohi."

In this vision of Baba, there is no antithesis of spiritual and secular. His secular-spirituality or spiritual secularism contains all, belongs to all by transcending limitations set by the book and the church. It is only our jaundiced apprehension that causes difference and division and hatred leading to communal violence and bloodshed. But His lovers, singing praises of the Mystery (don't talk or discuss) but sink into silence that passeth understanding. So have declared the Vedas, the Puranas and the learned: "There the eyes cannot reach, neither can speech nor the mind. From whence words reflect back with thought without reaching the goal." In this spiritual genius of the ancient Hind is implicit the principle of secular democratic order—unlike the present democracy of incompetence that forms governments cunningly playing the game of numbers, smothering the quality by quantity—makes for freshness of appeal, wideness, flexibility and inwardness of suggestion that human beings be treated as different sparks of the Light growing towards perfection in an order in which right is might, helping the soul to grow in tune with its truth-light. Baba Nanak's worship of the timeless one, the 'Akal Purusa' as a million-bodied one is a communion of the pure mind. This realization is brought about by churning the power of the Word that emanates the cosmos, and at the same time mysteriously dwells in the temple of the human body. Thus, glorifying Naam, the lowly Nanak assures us that a status of siddha or pir is attained. The power of the Word churns the butter of life, gives conquest over mind, makes one Sheikh, a true spiritual being invested with the powers of Brahma and Indra. The wonder of wonders, O Nanak is that the "endless Word is reverberating in each heart"—runjun runjun kera ram.

The Guru, the embodiment of satnaam, is secular in the most vital sense carrying with him the ethos of a budding Nation belonging to all. He is neither Muslim nor Christian, nor the bearded and tight turbaned, or beardless tilakdari Hindustani, clinging to the shell and superficialities of religion, bereft of the power and grace of the diamond-Word. With his rediscovery of the perennial Religion, divested of all sectarianism, bigotry

and rigidity; he lifts the veil of ignorance or Maya from our eyes; brings to our life's door the vision of the Eternal capable of manifestation of myriad forms. A secular state cannot be indifferent to this Religion, as indifference or neglect to the Divine in man and Nature, creates an unbridgeable cleft in human consciousness by breeding atheism, skepticism, agnosticism giving birth to a purposeless social life with contrary and conflicting values that do not make for health, happiness and peace. Moreover, a secular state based on the ideals of liberty-fraternity-equality and indifferent to Religion is a contradiction in terms that is not practicable in the country that is predominately spiritual.

In the spiritual landscape of Guru's creative secularism; there is a magic-lilla or play of the mystic Word—the organ Voice of the Master of Existence, Aum-Allah—realized through love, devotion, sacrifice and above all, through sincere aspiration and intense yearning. Sat Guru, did not believe in the philosophy of: either this or that; but in the divinity in man in which the duality melts in a wild ecstasy by experiencing 'this and that' as facets of the same Reality. In visualizing 'Arup, akal, niranjan' manifested as 'akar' and 'saguna,' Baba realized 'oankar' as Brahman-Khuda epitomizing India's spiritually secular character of perceiving 'Ekam Sat' worshipped and seen variously as "sabh mahi joti, joti hai soi."

In this attitude of Oneness variously realized, no individual or community or nation can belittle or injure others without damaging itself. For, the law is: Try to throw dust into the eyes of God you will be blinded yourself. This realization is the pragmatic truth of the individual and collective life. Such a spiritual vision and catholic outlook of Sat Guru renders it possible to surmount all difficulties in a vision of unity. Unity is not uniformity. It cannot be brought about by pressuring or forcing our multi-dimensional web of social life to conform to a single monotone of uniformity, or by annihilation of difference and variety in nature. It is easily attained by weaving the complex existence of the Garden in a garland of flowers by a golden thread of Truth that makes for unity in variety.

The test of sincerity, lies in our being true to the teaching of the Master. Instead of soaking in liquor and sense pleasure, let's drink deep the draughts of the illuminating wine of the secret Word and become inebriated with divine love. Thus, we can "hammer on" to fulfill the

mission—for which 'Khalsa' was created—the mission of forging unity in the heterogeneous multiplicity of India; a necessary condition, a stage to be prepared for the global conquest of Eternal Dharma, the light of Unity, in which people shall breathe in the lap of triple godheads of democracy Equality-Fraternity-Liberty. To make dynamic our capabilities, we have to qualify the test and become "Gurumukh," i.e. live truth and become spirit and power of the Sabda. We have to take every caution not to segregate from others with our outer coverings of the body, with shows of ceremonies, worn-out taboos of the past that hide the sense of the Word; cloak its light in our superficial muttering, and loudly reciting the scripture that breed arrogance, hypocrisy and hate. The Gurumukh must realize that in the Word-Consciousness the ego drops like skin from the snake, for It is wider than the sky and exists prior to time-bound temporal process of terrestrial existence. At the dawn of its light on the golden child of Sat Guru the individual consciousness stretches its arms to embrace infinity. And in joy of Oneness, the Gurumukh exclaims: "O Lord, Thou art wonderful." *Wa hi guru*, the resounding of the primordial 'nada' multifariously in the corridors of Time as a song of countless meeting lives.

The mystic Word, the primordial "nada" existed before creation in the womb of undivided darkness, pure Void or sunya. It is not thought that gives birth to form or creation but the Seer-Will that impels the Thought to embody in beauty and give it an everlasting meaning of Reality. In this creative act of the Word the Infinite is always Infinite, whether dwelling in the heart of an atom or encompassing time-space continuum. In man and Nature, it is an ever growing transcendence in which Infinite is this and Infinite is that as "Sagar mahi bund, bund mahi sagru." Here, the trinity of Brahma-Vishnu-Mehesa becomes amplified to "kotī," and we are lost in wonder to adore the "Gardnar" expressing Himself in the delight of the creation in countless blended-notes as million hued flowers. Thus, the Master sings:

"Ihu jagu vari mera prabhu mali."

All flowers or individuals or communities are equal to Him and He leaves none without protection, "Sada samale ko nahi khali."

Attaining Sat Guru consciousness, we fall on our knees and in silent gratitude adore the variegated beauty of all 'Vari' or Garden in which

each and all is bound in a knot of relationship and love. India, like Gandhi, is not a person or a geographical isolation as much as a principle of life, an attitude of spirit in this experimental land of the Master of existence. As such, India's "historic mission," says Dr. Radhakrishnan "has been to forge unity among different races of men, different religious beliefs not by obliterating them but by harmonizing them." Hindustani nurtured in this lofty tradition acknowledges value wherever it is found. The Quran (sura iv, The Nis a part 8), exhorts humanity to... "Be mindful of God in whose name you seek another relationship with another, and respect this relationship." Gurmukhs, imbued in "Sadachara," purified by the flame of knowledge; dedicate themselves to the service of 'dharma' and fight the forces inimical to the principle of Harmony and integrity of Nation. This is mighty 'karma' of Guru Govind Singh that India is bound to complete. For out of our national integrity rooted in the principle of unity in diversity can emerge a new world order leading to world union. Moreover, India is 'karma-bhumi' and to turn it into a 'bhoga-bhumi' is to deviate from the path of righteousness or dharma. For Gurmukhs, the nation building is the 'mighty karma,' as the worship of Govinda to be executed with unconquerable force. It is what Baba Nanak means when he says "Karam kand ki bani joru." Without "joru" or Shakti, knowledge is impotent and love helpless to rule humanity.

The truth-light of the Word is an alchemic power of the timeless Spirit that turns chaos into cosmos, maintains the rhythm of evolution through the threatening vicissitudes of Nature and changes our destiny. The commands of the Tenth Guru for us are: "to recognize all mankind, whether Hindus or Muslim (or Sikhs) as One; to recognize no distance among them; to regard the monastery, the mosque (and the gurudwara) to be the same, and the Hindu worship the Muslim prayer (and the Sikhs worship) to be the same," for -

"Sabh mahi joti, joti hai soi,
tas dai chanani sabhs mahi chananu hoi."

Yes, in the Light we live, in the Light we go, as Light is in all, so Light is the body of That from which are kindled all our suns. In this Body, all forces and forms ebb and flow in an ordered movement of a giant complex system that is organic and whole like our body, in which, each

cell has an individual uniqueness and function, yet is inextricably related to the whole. In this divine order, all forms and human beings are our blood relations, everything is linked with everything and "O Nanak, the all pervading Naam (Sabda) dwelleth in the heart of all." In this experience of omniscience, one finds like Swami Rama how:

"...Infinity me enshrine,
All ears my ears all eyes my eyes,
All hands my hands all minds my minds,
I swallowed up death, all difference I drank up."

Such is man's 'dharma' or nature and law of life that upholds creation and directs its million movements. Sat Guru, like the ancient sages symbolizes 'dharma' as the proverbial bull. The four legs of the Bull or dharma suggest man's four-fold perfection of Soul-mind-life-body by living in the truth of the Word. The Word or Soul in us is truth-light. It cannot manifest on the conditions laid down by falsehood and ignorance. Through 'Dharma' alone we perfect all our fourfold personality with an eventual realization of the Lord in His fourfold aspects of - Love, Wisdom, Power and Beauty or Harmony. The vision of creation as a play of the million-bodied One is sublime and spiritual. In spiritually oriented secularism, man is constrained by the 'holy plan' of Nature to find his Self within everything around him, above him and in the forms of existence. It is natural, inevitable that the one form of worship be different from the other form of worship according to the nature and capability of the evolving human beings. These are different approaches to the reality, seen and named differently by the sages to suit the psychological make up of the human race. These different approaches cannot cause friction, hate and violence, if they are not tarnished and corrupted by the falsehood of communal ego and ignorance. As, in and through these forms of worship radiates the solar blaze of the diamond-word; the ceaseless chime of Aumkar continues resounding in the three letters "Alif, Laam, Meem" with which the Quran opens. In the Arabic grammar, the silence of letter "Laam" is filled with the sound 'U' with a resonance of the mystic sound of the Supreme Being as 'Aum.' To the initiate, the cryptic letters "Alif, Laam, Meem," contain the seed form of the secret Word and its everlasting meaning in 'akar' i.e. the mystery of the Self revealing itself in the forms of creation.

In this spiritual realization the harmony of contraries is achieved; the duality or separation in Aum-Allah disappears like blocks of snow melting when the sun of knowledge appears in the cloudless mind. It happens in its own accord when the butter of mind is churned by the power of the Word. "Sabadi udhre," says Nanak, "mera manu rata" and in the widened inner space the celestial rhythm goes on endlessly: "runjhun runjhun kare ram." The important in any form of worship is the worshippers' sincerity, faith, surrender, humility, devotion, love and above all, sayeth Nanak: "I am a sacrifice to Him who pervadeth water, earth and inter space." Through different religions:

"Millions praise Thee, O Lord, but infinite is Thy praise;
Sayeth Nanak, Thou it is, who created the universe of myriad
forms."

Spiritually secular attitude of Baba makes one grasp the value and limitations of all scriptures, prophets, sages and saints. Sat Guru values and appreciates variety of spiritually valid experiences of the Reality, 'Ekam Sat, Satnaam, tat satyam,' that is fathomless, limitless defying all definitions, so sings Baba Nanak—

"His devotees praise Him, yet never
attain full knowledge of the Infinite,
like streams stumbling into the ocean
they know not the depths-therein."

Living in the oceanic consciousness of the Word, no religion is superior or inferior and we cannot utter notes of discard, division or separation, as all religions are the tides of the Omniscient Ecstasy. The superiority or inferiority complex with which most of religious followers suffer, is due to the egocentric consciousness of a frog in a well, that, frets and fumes in vain to limit the Limitless, separate the Spaceless with its time bound leaps, standards and conventions. In the 'Akal-Purusa-consciousness' as embodied in the person of Sat Guru, the confluence of two mighty streams Hinduism-Islam is made possible; the Bhalla-Maradana separateness is annulled, as both are the aspects of the same Reality. Moreover, Hinduism-Islam is not a belief in set forms or creeds that ill-suit to the changing ethos of human psychology, and the changing conditions of the age, as much as a pilgrimage of the twin-streams towards the seas of light and

ananda. It is in our actions, thoughts and deeds our greatness is judged and justified. So, the imperative is: "Kirat Karni nam Japna ate Vand Chhakna," because 'haq Allah,' 'Isq Allah,' is a mode of living in consciousness of God in all, who judges what we are in our deeds and in what we become inwardly. Now, "Kirat Karni... ate Vand Chhakna," in this Kali Yuga or the age of confusion, is a hard nut to crack for those who are money-minded people with goat-consciousness whose, religion is belly-cheer, a lip service, affectation and a source of vital satisfaction. Being totally indifferent and forgetful of the power of 'Karma' or 'amal' that brings upheavals when the curve of evolution adopts a downward course towards infernal regions of lurid light. True 'Karma' is "Vand Chhakna" and there is no bondage or fear of attachment to the result of actions performed in Word-Consciousness and through its power. It is through 'Karma Marga,' we are led to the 'Jaana Marga,' towards the realization of Soundless Sound where the individual is soaked in the seas of Light and is established in "Sarvabavena" consciousness of the Gita. The 'Karma' is the force of Sabda Shakti, the dynamic power working through individual and collective life. It makes us to live and act as an instrument or symphony of the consciousness and Force of Aumkar-Allah. Thus, alone the 'Dharma Khand' or the kingdom of Truth-Goodness-Beauty is established. The fierce power of Sabda-Shakti embodies in the flaming sword of the warrior of Light, who alone can vanquish the hostile forces of darkness and obscurity obstructing the advent of light and love and goodness of the Dharma Khand.

The Ancient Hind lives with a mission. Our Nationalism is an emerging global sense in man stretching her arms to embrace universe. India epitomizes the mystery of the Sabda-Shakti becoming the superhuman rider with a flaming sword to fulfill the law of Love in this Dharma Khand, the Land of the Poet-Seers, Incarnations and Gurus. Dharma established, the Truth-forms or "rupu" begin radiating truth-thought and truth-light. It is the first step towards greater 'Samraj,' when Dharma rules global consciousness and humanity lives in peace and progress marching towards the goal in the arms of relationship and love. These are the 'arms' of Sabda-Brahma, the principle of Harmony that makes probable for the extremes to meet and live as two aspects of the Reality like Bhalla-Maradana in perfect relationship. This is the root source of real secularism; the base of India's religious, political and social life, and the spiritual-secularism thrives only in the atmosphere of Equality-

Fraternity-Liberty. "Gandhi's entire attitude to life," as has been observed by Amal Kiran, "was dedicated by a firm faith in God incarnated in the traditional Hindu figure Rama."⁸ In the faith of God untruthfulness, violence, uncharitableness, sensuality are strangers and do not exist. At the core of secularism is a vision of potential divinity in man, passing like a thread through all forms of Nature, holding them in a loving embrace of a garland in oneness without effacing individual uniqueness that "Kai na Kise jeha upaia." This is what "can therefore be described as secular spirituality, and it is the dynamic modern Zeitgeist, the active temper of our time in the finest and deeper form." As such, "it illustrates the most appropriate and Vital sense in which India can be faithful to her spiritual genius without either failing to be abreast of modernism or ceasing to be a Secular State."⁹

In a vital sense, the Indian Secularism attempts to pattern a new world order, guided and inspired by the divinity hidden in man that values principles more than persons, truth more than forms. "Truth" says Sat Guru "is higher than all, but higher by far is the true living" that generates new consciousness, makes a new being of us. It does not allow the state or priest or a book to assume a divine prerogative to pervert, degrade democracy into a vicious and gruesome game of moneybag elections. Harkening the call of Sat Guru, we must come out of the narrow communal walls of temples, mosques, churches and Gurudwaras, and worship That in the open through every form of the breathing universe. Sat Guru asks us to cast away the worn out garments of separation be natural and true to ourselves. He exhorts us to wear natural health, humility, forbearance and priceless spell of civility; then he assures "the spouse shall come into thy power." The place of its worship is everywhere as everything is sacred. The difference between the temple and farmyard, the cloister and the laboratory, the church and the studies, the cell and the market place disappear, as all are fit places of worship of the Omnipresent.

India, the music-throb of the transcendent mystery of our "spouse" has consciously or unconsciously, devised a spiritually secular symbol in tri-colour Flag with a wheel in the lap of white radiance of eternity. The white colour is always the symbol of the nameless and formless "spouse" or Eternity, upholding the wheel i.e. the temporal process of time and

change. The mystic tricolor Flag represents divine democracy, the power of harmony, the synthesizing force of the universal consciousness of the Eternal, of which the different cultures or civilizations—Hinduism-Islam-Christianity—are parts and expression (not finalized and perfect), still marching towards a new glory and a greater perfection. If our eye is single our body shall be full of light to discern in the Tiranga, the Word personified as the image of Sat Guru the "spouse" or the white radiance of Eternity with two disciples (represented in red and white colours), the two streams of culture coming from different directions, yet marching towards the same Source. In the occult working of the Timeless "spouse," the wheel of change is an expression of a spiral movement of the time cycles from inorganic matter to the mentalised living matter and on wards towards the spiritualisation of matter. "So we have," writes Dr. Radhakrishnan, in the flag, "a symbol of the universal process through which humanity has to go." As such, it is the mantra of our "spouse," and by following its cryptic message, a man can live with the perspective of eternal background in the mind goading him for a purposive life.

The human being, as he is (at present) in this "wheel" of temporal process is incomplete, ignorant and unregenerate. He cannot remain so for ever as change is the law of Nature. He has to aspire to get beyond his present imperfection and achieve completeness of being. In the Indian National Flag, the spiral movement of the wheel of time indicates that man has been evolving or advancing from stage to stage, from minerals to plants, plants to animals and animals to human beings. As the mystic Jalal-ud-Rumi experienced when exclaimed: "I died as mineral and became plant, I died as plant and rose to animal." Now, from human being the advancement must culminate to God in man. How can he do it? The 'wheel' of time indicates motion, and motion can give nothing but motion. So, the temporal process, the wheel of time of which we are part is not self-supporting and does not rest on itself. It depends and rests on the lap of our "spouse," the pure eternal background, "the white radiance of eternity." It is not possible to describe eternity for it is the infinite enlargement of consciousness that gives the feeling of immensity that cannot be possessed and described in terms of logical propositions. Swami Rama reveals this fact in his poetry of facts:

"Oh! How could I get my Love's Likeness?

Could anything like him be conceived?

Could he in camera be received?

Could artist stand to take his picture?

Could he appear in colour and figure?

The camera of form did melt away.

His flood of light was too much, too much.

Oh! How could I get my Love's Likeness"?

The mystery of our "spouse," the pure white background that upholds and maintains the temporal process of the wheel of time is beyond description. We can simply suggest That in halting words, because as Dr. Radhakrishnan says, "any account we give, it falls short of its immense wealth." We can at best pay homage of adoration in silence, the "homage that the finite mind can pay to the infinite mystery which inspires the whole temporal process."¹⁰ Standing before this infinite mystery of our "spouse," how shameful and ridiculous seem our petty quarrels about the names we give to the "spouse," or about the ways we take to the Divine. The ways may turn and twist, like rivers that run crooked or straight towards the same goal.

Here, we are reminded of a miraculous event of Baba Nanak when he visited Multan. A particular good Pir sent a cup-brimful with milk to the Baba, communicating the gesture of a totalitarian ideology, that there is nothing beyond what I have known of the Supreme, and your presence here is unwanted because, the Book has once for all defined and fixed the Absolute. But, we know that in this ordered change nothing is fixed and settled forever. The "gentle Nanak," drunk with wine of everlasting bliss, eyed the cup and understood the message. Putting a few petals of flower over the milk, returned the cup with due reverence, communicating the message of the myriad-minded Absolute expressing Itself in countless ways in the beauty of the evolving wheel of time. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, "There are totalitarian ideologies not only in politics but in religions which hold that they alone are in possession of the one valid truth and all our teaching and learning should follow the line of this truth. On this view, to doubt becomes a dangerous heresy."¹¹ But, the mantra

of spiritual secularism of the Tiranga does not allow us to find fault and criticize the worship of others. The immensity of the "spouse" is beyond grasp, beyond description and sayeth Nanak; "Thou art beyond finiteness. We are finite and praise Thee in finite forms. How can we know how great you are?" It is from Thee, i.e. the white eternal background that Paganism, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and many more as various God visions are born, that have saved a number of souls, and need yet to evolve, expand with the ordered change, if they want to bring down heaven on earth and divinise mankind. We are in a stage of transition. The 'wheel' or ordered change of temporal life, to borrow the words of Robert Frost, has yet miles to go, and

"The woods are dark and deep

But I have promises to keep

And miles to go before I sleep."

We can go 'fast' i.e. accelerate the speed of evolution if we follow sincerely the message of the Flag. The Flag tells us how to live in the world of time with perspective of eternity. We have to develop a chastity of spirit which does not recognize boundaries of nations, races etc. How can we do it? This is what the orange colour at the top of the Flag communicates. In our country 'tapas' sacrifice and austerity is indicated by the saffron colour. This colour of fire at the top of the Flag tells, that art of living ought to be rooted in the Divine consciousness. It is possible when man burns all appetites, lower passions and makes oneself a clean man. The colour at the top is a sign of vigorous discipline of mind so that every act we do, we do it as a dedication to the "spouse" or the eternal. Only thus man can make himself fit to live in this world with the eternal background in his mind. This attainment is not the final consummation, not an end in itself. This indication is given by the green colour at the bottom of the Flag. Green is the colour of growth and vegetation. After we are disciplined, after burning the dross of passions and lower appetites, as suggested by the saffron colour at the top, we have to use that wisdom for the purpose of creating a better life in this world. The green colour, colour of growth, makes it imperative for us to produce creative life in this world. Thus, we have seen that the Indian National Flag stands for the Religion of Spiritual secularism, a "symbol of the

universal process through which humanity has to go." The 'wheel' tell us that we are all part of the temporal process of time sustained and directed by the white radiance of eternity named and worshipped variously to make us live with this eternal background in our minds. This we can do as pointed out by the orange colour at the top through sacrifice or 'tapas' because the purpose of life (as indicated by the green colour) is to utilize our activities says Dr Radhakrishnan, "for the purpose of producing better life, a creative life, in which every man will have amplitude of existence, more richness of being, more fervour of friendship."¹² This is what we mean by: Naam Japna...Kirat Karni... ate Vaid Chhakna."

Our National Religion as personified in our Tri-Colour Flag is Knowledge and realization of the pure eternal background in which Aum-Allah meet in a loving embrace as is symbolized by Sat Guru-Bhalla-Maradana Consciousness. This is truly spiritual-secular living in harmony with an awareness of the fundamental unity of all religions based on impartiality, comprehension, forbearance, love and sympathy. All this is what India represents. Her tradition is an evolving process of time that is as old as the Himalayan glaciers, but fresh and new as the hurrying streams flowing from these glaciers aiming at "sustained and all-comprehending effort at spiritual evolution that has no need of cult and creed."¹³ Following this tradition, "no group of citizens," aptly says Dr. Radhakrishnan, "shall arrogate to itself rights and privileges which it denies to others. No person should suffer any form of disloyalty of discrimination because of his religion; but all alike should be free to share to the fullest degree in the common life."¹⁴ In this spiritually secular vision, there can never be any theocratic dominance, or any exploitation of religion to suit political or communal interests. It delivers us from -

"... Our limiting ray of thought
And the reluctance of our blinded hearts
To embrace the godhead in whatever guise."¹⁵

The sublimity of the spiritual secularism, as crystallized in Sat Guru Baba Nanak consciousness generated in our hearts can bring together Bhalla-Maradana in a "harmonized circle of a sure embrace;" helping thereby to fulfil the intention of God in humanity, which according to Sri Aurobindo is -

"A march of universal power in Time,
The harmonic order of Self's Vastitudes,
In cyclic symmetries and metric planes."¹⁶

The march of the temporal process is an endless figuring of the Sat or Spirit in things. The Gurumukh, who intuitively It in and through the modifications of his mind, feels and expresses It in thought, word and act and becomes "nihal," i.e. free from ego and desire, transformed in life, renewed in spirit. Therefore, "Jo bolay," is definitely not a lip service to the Word by shouting in a frenzy of communal passion, but a sort of communion or meditation on Sat—the pure white Eternity. Deep and persistent 'Japa' i.e. "Jo bolay" or 'tapas' or burning of ego and desire through the Word culminates in the "new birth." Afterwards, one is neither Hindu nor Muslim nor Christian or Sikh but the child of Light—one in all and all in one, as from the white radiance of eternity creation is born "ek noor se sab jag upje." In the man who becomes "nihal," an enlightened Hindu, resigned and dedicated Muslim, meek and pure Christian, heroic and courageous Gurumukh or Sikh become one, harmonized and integrated. This is the vision crystalized in the mantric words: "Jo Bolay so Nihal: Sat Sri Akal." The "bolay" or uttering is dwelling or living in the deathless and the divine presence of Sabda. It is to be bathed in the sea of nectar and became the children of immortal bliss. This is how we become "nihal," clean, purified of all dirt and dross of egoistic consciousness. The division, duality and separation vanish and disappear forever. A person who is "nihal," his eyes are inebriated with the nectar of the Word; he catches the glimpse of the Sun of Truth, the "Sat," the Existence absolute in which the universe appears like a wave panting in the sleepless sea of Light: "Jal te tarang, tarang te hai jalau."

The "Sat" in "Sat Sri Akal" is Ekam, the Truth undefined that cannot be mentally formulated or described as; It is "Akal," the transcendent beyond Time-space-cause triangle. Being Indeterminate it is yet mysteriously the causeless-cause of this temporal process of Time that It upholds, maintains and directs. How the Gardener becomes the Garden and the flowers is the mysterious way of the logic of the Infinite contained in the word "Sri" not Shri. The "Sri" is the tapa-shakti or the Word of the Timeless Being. "Sri" in between "Sat" and "Akal" is the absolute power that dwells in the absolute silence of Tat Purusha. It is "Sri," the energized power of the Timeless or "Akal," which sets the wheel of Time in motion

as the self-expression of the One in million-blended notes. With this perspective and vision in our hearts we say, "Jo bolay so nihal, Sat Sri Akal." The "Sat" or Truth in the words of the Mother is not "something well defined, well sorted out, well established and then you are nice and quiet, you no longer need to seek! You adopt it and say, 'Tis is the Truth and then it is rigidly set-that is what all religions did, they set up their truth as a dogma. But that is not the truth anymore. Truth cannot be expressed in the mind's terms.'" They fail to grasp the Will or Iccha-shakti; the "Sri" of the Akal Purusha being all-powerful is also omniscient and omnipresent. It enacts the drama of creation, preservation and destruction "hukmi hovani akar." His will is an inscrutable mystery, "hukmu na kahia jai." The wonder of wonders is that the essence of a drop is the same as that of the sea and in the limits of an atom is outlined the map of the Limitless.

So is the mantra "Vahi Guru" a condensed power and consciousness of the Limitless in the limits of trinity-Brahma, Vishnu, Mehasa i.e. three in One and One in three? Wa = Vishnu, H= Hara or Mehasa or Rudra, Guru= Brahma are the cosmic principles of creation, preservation and destruction personified in the person of Sat guru. By sowing the seed of Truth-Word in the heart of the 'Sikh' or 'sisha' the Guru is the creator Brahma. After sowing of the seed of the mystic Word in the consciousness of the pupil, the guru shapes him into a new man by giving him a second birth. He is Brahma, the creator of a new man in the disciple. He is also Rudra or Shiva, as he destroys all that obstructs the germination of truth-seed, all that resists truth-light. Sat Guru, in his person of Shiva or Rudra accelerates, speeds up the evolution of the disciple by destroying all falsehood, all that is perverse to change, obscure and obstructing the upward march of individual and collective life. In his Rudra-form, the Master looks fierce and terrible and cannot tolerate in the Gurumukh any perturbation of fear, weakness, arrogance, vanity, ignorance and sin. It is so, as without paying debt to "Rudra" i.e. without the rejection of falsehood, ignorance, ego and selfishness, the Law of Love or Dharma, the Vishnu cannot prevail and be fulfilled and preserved in the progressive harmony of Life evolving towards higher reaches of consciousness. Sat Guru in his person of Vishnu fulfills and perfects the law of Love by making the 'seed' grow into a wish-fulfilling tree. Such is the magic-mystery enshrined in the mantra "wahi guru."

The Sat Guru as the delegate of Akal Purusha, is perfected and fulfilled in the triple cosmic principles—Brahma, Vishnu, Mehesu—integrated in a wider purpose with a deeper meaning. In Sat Guru as in the Absolute, Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra Coalesce as being powers of His Maya, the Will or the creative power that makes appear One in Three: The Granth Sings:

"Brahma, bishnu, mahesu upae
maia mohu Vadhaia."

In our faith, sincerity and surrender is disclosed the magic-lilla of Sat Guru's triple powers, that bring a new birth, by destroying all that is negative in us; so that the law of Vishnu or Love prevail. A descending peace enters in us; our minds are de-conditioned, the ego effaced, the hearts and senses cleared of all personal emotions and feeling of separation. In the humming beat of mantric words "Vahi Guru," our bonds are loosened; the shackles of prison house are broken, and the soul stands ready to embrace universe in the realms of absolute freedom. Japa or meditation on the mantra "Vahi Guru," is dwelling of Consciousness on "nada," the music throb of the universe; the vibrating sound of 'Aumkar' revealing the mystery of the One in three and the triple evolution of mind, life and body heading towards complete spiritualization of the global family. "Vahi Guru," a mantra of the Supreme Master's power manifests Himself as Creator, Destroyer, Preserver of the universe, yet being Akal Purusha is forever untainted by the ignorance of this triple creation. Such is His inscrutable Maya or Power. To feel and live this Mystery one becomes "nihal." Therefore, "Jo Bolay so Nihal, Sat Sri Akal.

In Sat Guru's person is blended spiritual and secular in a single embrace, in which, the body is the temple of That and Matter reveals the face of the Divine. It is the Religion of God hidden in man, in Nature, in Nation that makes this Earth a prayer Hall to pray five times like a true Muslim.
A prayer: -

For Truth,
For what is right
For noble charity in God's name,
For good intention, and
The praise and glory of God

In man, society, Nation,
World, Universe.

Instead adoring the prayer Hall with flowers of peace and beauty, the plants of health and happiness, vast sunlit fields of laughter and abundance, where we can live and love to fulfil the Divine purpose, we have raised the narrow walls of communal ego, ignorance and falsehood making the Earth a vale of tears. A true worshipper enters the mosque or temple in complete humility. Being seated on the prayer mat, he opens the Gita or the Quran of noble living and, nestles in the lap of the Infinite. And, lo! He finds Kashi or Kaaba within. Going to Kashi or Kaaba is justified only when a person is wafting the fragrance of modesty, contentment and fragrance of good deeds around him. Thus alone grace works, turns difficulties into opportunities, weakness into unfaltering strength and changes our destiny. Therefore, says Nanak let:

“...Truth be thy prophet
And thy prayer be for God's grace
And the rosary be of His Will.
God will keep thy honour.”

This is our revolutionary Sat Guru Baba Nanak. In 'him' the best of Islam and Hinduism are harmonized on the Indian foundation: "The ineffable glory of unity in plurality "sayeth Nanak "is beyond and indescribable." Baba Nanak, the wandering flame of Fire was the man of masses. He loved all. Carrying in his journey the merchandise of sacred book on the horse of truth for the simple, needy and deserving. Instead of money and care about next day's meals; he kept tied up with him "virtues" as traveling expenses and never in his heart had any thought for tomorrow. His renunciation was not an escape of a cloistered hermit but renunciation in action through love. He was a unique tradesman, dealing in divine goods, as well as, the most virtuous peasant, sowing the seed of God, cultivating the soul of good deeds, irrigating with the water of truth and faith for the harvest of His ambrosial gifts. Spreading his message of "the ineffable glory of unity," Baba exhorted people to:

"Practice truth, contentment and Love,

And then the worship of God's name...
Make self-restraining and good acts thy lives,
And the utterances of the Name thy ablutions
Irrespective of caste, creed or colour
Is the duty of one"?

Sat Guru like inspired poet-seers of the Ancient Hind, taught in verses, revealed directly in communion with the Word. His language—a secular admixture of Sanskrit and various vernaculars as Hindi, Punjabi, Braj, Arabic, and Persian—is simple, plain with tremendous momentum and Vitality. To borrow Martin Heidegger's words his "language itself is poetry in the essential sense." The different vernaculars are fused together to present a kaleidoscopic of images that thrill with divine vibrations carrying a mystic fragrance of deep power of joy defying all description. Even "the nature of image" to quote Heidegger again, "is to let something be seen."¹⁸ The collection of celestial verses called "Japji Sahib," is a crowning wisdom of the Sikh-gospel Guru Granth Sahib; which is the clue to a paradigm of enduring National integration. It is an outflow of "deva-vani" or "Guru Vaani, the testimony that India is one, and her people are united in diversity. The Adi Granth is an oriental orientation of the Religion of spiritual-secularity, the realisation of the One felt and seen as "anant-gunu," myriad-bodied-One. Our motto has always been: "let noble thoughts come from all sides," and the Adi Granth is the confluence of wisdom from all sides—from the Gurus, Jaidev, Farid, Nam Dev, Trilochan, Parmanand, Sadhana, Beni, Ramanand, Dhanna, Pipa, Sain, Kabir, Ravidas, Mira, Bhikhan, Surdas, Hindi poets, Sufi Bhaktas—each from different part of the country to reveal the ineffable glory of unity in plurality and plurality becoming unity. The glory and bliss of unity transcends mere geographical isolation, and is unlike a single monotone of stark singleness of mechanical repetition of desert-dead habits of the past. It is a wide embrace of an omniscient Ecstasy that holds humanity in her arms of love and relationship. The Adi Granth exemplifies this uniqueness by invoking:

Krishna	10, 0000 times
Rama	2,400 times
Para Brahma	550 times
Omkar	400 times

Apart from these names, the 'Granth Sahib,' invokes the authority of the Vedas, Puranas, and Smritis about 35 times. Nirguna Absolute, Jagdish, Nirankar, Niranjan, Atma, Paramatma, Parmeshwar, Antaryami, Kartar are invoked 2,600 times and, those of Saguna deity—Govind, Murari, Madhav, Saligram, Vishnu, Sarangpani, Mukund, Thakur, Damodar, Vasudev, Mohan, Banwari, Madhusudan, Keshav, Chaturbhuj, etc are invoked 2000 times. Thus, the Granth Sahib" is the beauty and glory of myriad-bodied unity of the One, which is same today, yesterday and forever.

The Granth is a divine rapture of "Milney kee memha," that cannot be described, as it is sayeth Nanak "parey pareela." It is not a person we adore in the Granth; but the essence of the divine persons; not a form or ritual, but a principle or truth behind forms and rituals. To exploit the teaching for raising a dreadful communal ego that separates from the whole is a deviation from the path. It makes us bereft of the Grace and invites a blow. For "we cannot afford" Sri Aurobindo says, "to raise any institution to the rank of fetish. To do so would be simply to become the slaves of our own machinery."¹⁹ The spirit of the age demands that we should change ourselves; alter the colour of our consciousness; re-energize the country with the power of Word and create a "nucleus of men" in whom long dormant Khalsa-Shakti, the Aryan force of the flaming sword is reborn to fill every nook and cranny of our land. The genuine Khalsa values or the Aryan strength is rooted in the principle of eternal Dharma or the Law of existence. It is a divinized power in operation as embodied in the person of Guru Govind Singh that is needed to carve the way, make the path smooth for the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Sat Guru Baba Nanak is not a single episode in the epic climb of man to the solar realms. Sat Guru incarnates in all Gurus to complete the God's labour and prepare the stage for the last act to be enacted. Baba Nanak and Guru Govind Singh are two aspects of Para-Brahma consciousness—the absolute Silence and dynamic power. Baba Nanak incarnating in Guru Govind Singh as the superhuman Rider, has yet to finish the unfinished task of the Victory of "devas" in the battle for Light. Guru Govind Singh's span of 42 years was a prologue to the epic battle for Light, a preparation for bringing a greater force on the earth scene and, a call to the Nation to get ready for the final struggle. In a reign of

bigotry and terror against non-Muslims, Guru Govind Singh found people around him, "Doves" and made them into "Hawks" with his slogan: "fear not, nor keep anyone under your terror." When, he was only nine years old, he willingly sent his father Guru Teg Bahudur to scarify himself to save the Dharma of the ancient fathers from the ruler's tyranny. An extraordinary hero of the Land, Guru Govind Singh was moved by the divine passion and power, to save the country from the tyranny of the rulers. Guru Teg Bahudur who is aptly called Hind Di Chadar, representing the pride, dignity and sovereign spirit of the Country, inspired Khalsa founded by Guru Govind Singh. The 'panj' piaras chosen by Guru Govind Singh conveyed the great message of democracy, social justice and secular spirituality culminating in national integration. Khalsa and the birth of Nationalism in the Punjab are simultaneous acts of the warrior-force that dealt a final blow to the six hundred years of Mughal rule in Punjab. Truly, Atal Bihari Vajpyee described Khalsa the "sword arm of the country," whose birth came in terms of the psychological setup of the country and the special spiritual tradition that has been rendered static by the aggressive hostile forces, blind to reason and repugnant to the principle of unity in diversity.

The Birth of 'Khalsa,' the warriors of the divine Naam, on Baisaki in 1699 is of momentous historical significance. It was not as a creation of separate sect to defend a community or uphold a dogma but to harmonize all communities, destroy racial discrimination, casticism eating the vitals of the country. The birth was in response to the call of the age for upholding the rule of 'dharma' that shall unite, and hold together the segregated communities in perfect relationship. To Khalsa weakness is sin, ignorance is sin and fear is the only sin to fear. Therefore, wrong could not come where shines the light of the Word imbued by the love of humanity. The Sikh Khalsa was to quote Sri Aurobindo, "a democratic institution, astonishingly original and novel creation and its face was turned not to the past but the future."²⁰ It is a "first attempt to combine the deepest elements of Islam and Vedanta;" that as ill luck would have it, could not be materialized in a short life span of the Guru.

The 'Khalsa,' like 'gho,' 'agni,' 'surya,' etc in the Veda, is a cryptic word with a common import for the masses, but a secret-sense for the initiates to be inwardly realized for the transmutation of the five elemental form

with an eventual preparation for five fold perfection – Physical, Vital, Mental, Spiritual and Divine. Just as 'Agni,' is a physical fire for the unregenerate mass of people, but for the advanced, it is an ascending flame of aspiration in the human heart, the Divine Will, the first thing needed for the entry into the spiritual life. So, 'Khalsa' is the divinised vital energy, the growing soul-form of the Guru, born to destroy the anti-dharmic powers that keep their hold on the elemental body of human kind. When, the Sabda-Shakti sits on the fierce and terrible Lion or Singh, i.e. the invincible vital power and strength, it is purified and divinized. Then one is 'Khalsa,' the egoless and desireless warrior of the Light. When consciousness of the Word energies itself, the fire of 'tapas' is kindled and Sikh or Sisha is born anew as 'Khalsa.' Khalsa is 'devij,' a new energized force of the Word-Consciousness. His assuming of 5K's in context with a critical and transitional historical situation was a symbolic gesture of the future divine-image of man growing out of the fire of tapas. The cryptic sense in 5K's has a resonance similar to that of 5M's in 'Tantric' system, that does not allow the initiate to wallow in pleasure-pond of five elemental body, but raise the five elements in man to the level of five perfections according to the aim and purpose of the spiritual evolution. There is a hidden or occult meaning of the 5K's and 5M's that we have to unlock if we don't make 'Khalsa,' a rigid, static and limited communal creed of a man imprisoned in the five elements of the body; but a steady radiation of a growing consciousness and Force of the diamond Word.

When a Sikh, the child-disciple of the embodied Word-power, burns ego and desire of the five elemental body in the tapa-shakti of the Word, he is born anew as 'Khalsa,' pure, Arya the noble to rule over the five elements or 5K's and not merely to pay lip homage to the Guru by decorating the body to separate oneself from the humanity. It is good to have 5K's around our body with an understanding that the physical things are to be substituted by the 5 psychic perfections. Just as it is good to be born in temple; but to die in a temple is no progress for it is forgetting the ideal form behind the temple, making the form rigid and separate from the universal stream of Life, which is a song of many meeting lives.

It is not just combing the hair, but combing or clearing the dirt and dross of lower passions that besiege the soul and hamper its evolution. After

this ritual of combing the circle of grace or 'Kada' surrounds us and protects us from outer harms. Then, we are able to generate the power of Sabad Shakti in us. The matted locks or 'Kesh' knotted at the head does not allow power-generated go out of the body. It also protects us from the invisible powers to enter into us. This generated power, in due course of sadhana, gives birth to the flaming sword 'Karpan,' to fight dark forces that keep their grip on humanity. Out of the husk of the physical coverings, the Gurumukh is goaded to churn out the soul-essence of new creation. For, the Gardener is also a hidden poet, the supreme scientist playing with the possibilities. His creative magic brings out new surprises by giving a new direction to the past realization. The Gardener is preparing the soil for fresh fields and pastures new and not repeating the past in turns of bygone ages. The 'Khalsa,' cannot stand still, for it is an evolving Force growing in tune with the spirit of the age. The time's spur shall instil new inspiration to the warriors of the Light, make them renew the pledge, labour for His scheme and change the world to suit His holy mould. Because, it is He manifested in the song of the universe, "Wahi Guru" —

"Apahi gawai apahi nachai

Api bajavai tura."

By lowering and throttling the mystic meaning of the 5K's, reducing them to a rigid creed breeds dogmatism, bigotry, intolerance, separation and hate. The dismal separatist turn to thrive on a communal ego is cutting the roots of the Indus-spiritual civilization that flourished on the banks of the five rivers of the Punjab. It is not what the Gurus did and wanted us to do.

Guru Govind Singh, the dynamic aspect of Sat Guru Baba Nanak-Consciousness, came two hundred years after Baba Nanak. With his missionary zeal, he protected, safe-guarded and revitalised the eternal dharma of the Land enshrined in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita, the Puranas, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana etc. His superhuman personality synthesized all that is best in both Islam and Hinduism. His profound scholarship, coupled with dauntless and invincible Arya-Shakti (being emanation of Lord Rama), infused a new dynamism and orientation of the evolving 'Brahma-Vidya' or the psycho-spiritual

science of the ancients. In his autobiography, "Bachittar Natak" (strange Drama), Guru mentions the purpose for which his father Guru Teg Bahadur had made the supreme sacrifice:

"To protect their sacred thread and the frontal mark.

In this dark Kali age,

He performed the supreme sacrifice

For the sake of 'Dharma.'

He gave away his head,

Without a sigh on his lips.

He surrendered his life,

But not his resolve."

The "supreme sacrifice" of his father filled Guru Govind Singh with a divine passion. His love to serve and establish the Kingdom of 'dharma' transformed him into a flaming sword of fire with a single aspiration:

Sakal jag main khalso panth gaje

Jage dharm Hindu sakal bhad bhaje."

Accordingly, Guru Govind Singh came out of his voluntary exile and proclaimed himself the head of the Hindu nation in 1865. His paeans to Ram-avatar and Krishna-avatar link him with 'surya vansh' the Solar Dynasty, the race of Divine warriors pledged to protect Earth from the hostiles and establish the kingdom of Love and Truth. The 'Dasvin Padshah Ka Granth' echoing Chandi and numerous stories infuse in us the past heroism of our Heroes and at the same time invest the past with fresh wings to soar into the future glories. It is out of a grand synthesis, the sword of Khalsa the Truth-Force was born. It represented the pride, the dignity, and the sovereign sprit of the country with a clarion call:

"Dharam, Veda, Maryaa, jag mein chalun,

Gua ghaat ka dosh gag se mitaun."

"Here it was," Swami Vivekanada says, "that one of the last and one of the most glorious heroes of our own race Guru Govind Singh, after shedding his blood and that of his dearest and nearest for the cause of the religion, even when deserted by those for whom this blood was shed,

retired into the South to die like a wounded lion, struck to the heart without a word against his country, without a single word of murmur."²¹ The retreat of the "wounded lion" is not a defeat, but going behind the scene, so as to prepare the earth-consciousness for receiving the "superhuman rider" in a new guise with his conquering sword. For, his defeat is not defeat whom the Divine guides but a period of preparation for the final battle for Light as the bloodshed for the divine cause cannot go in vain.

It is in response to the collective aspiration of the children of the Land; Khalsa, the passionflower sprang out of the sacred blood of Sat Guru for destroying the anti-divine forces to synchronize with the universal forces. According to Sri Aurobindo, the "people which having achieved national self-consciousness came nearest to achieving also organized political unity were the Sikhs for whom Guru Govind Singh deliberately divinized a common secular and spiritual center in the Khalsa."²² It is in Khalsa, the emerging divinised invisible vital force that the dream of Gurus shall be perfected, which is "to transform the artificial political unity of a heterogeneous empire, heterogeneous in racial composition, language and culture into a real and psychological unity."²³

Alas! This lofty ideal of the Khalsahood, its sublime realization is stuck in the mud and the mire of elemental consciousness of communal egoism, struggling to survive within the boundaries of want and selfishness of a community. This cleft in consciousness, the segregation in social life coupled with human recklessness has endangered the ecological balance; upset the life cycle to invite large-scale destruction. We have turned deaf ear to the call of the 'hour' that demands our concentration on the global health, the problem of human survival than to lay waste our lives in violence and hate and shedding our own blood. Mankind in this period of transition has entered into a realm of tragedy. If it ignores the 'call' in its sluggishness to remain sunken in inertia and torpor, a tale of suffering, woe and destruction shall be the outcome of the character of the global consciousness to show that character is destiny. It is "to be or not to be." Either, we heed the 'call,' and fight to mould this world to His 'holy scheme,' or be annihilated by the anti-democratic and anti-divine sons of Darkness.

Charatvarsh, the Ancient Hind, an experimental land of the Divine is

'Karma Bhumi or Tapa Bhumi.' Unlike the European concept of Nation, India is an attitude of mind, an evolving soul-consciousness that does not separate thought from act and concept from performance. Her measure of human progress is not in terms of "labour saving machines," accumulating wealth by degrading man; but labour elevating techniques that measure progress in terms of man's prosperity, health, happiness and resulting spiritual peace. It is a growing totality of happiness, a steady, perpetual expression of the divine—partly dynamic and largely dormant—working through hundred crore children of the Land. The 'dharma-bhumi,' made sacred by the feet of sages, Gurus and Avatars has (due to our collective karma) become an arena of the dark forces of falsehood, working for disintegration as they hate the spiritual secularism of our evolving democracy. Carrying hellish arms they shout for "freedom" to live in Pakistan like the Mujahirs, or else to live isolated like frog imagining its well to be the universe, and God's omnipotence restricted within the circle of a single creed. They forget that roots of Pakistan are in India. The division of the country on the basis of religion was unnatural, unscientific and undemocratic, as religion does not define a nation. It only sows the seeds of intolerance, hate, violence and bloodshed. Nehru aptly called it "a pernicious doctrine" injurious to the secular ideology of Equality-Fraternity-Liberty.

On the principle of 'identity in separateness' i.e. Truth is one and sage call it through different names is founded our nationhood. It is upon this lofty ideal the 'Adi Granth' was compiled by Guru Arjun Dev, the fifth Nanak to bring harmony of contraries. By upholding this principle in the teeth of the aggressive powers, Guru Arjun Dev became a martyr. Was he in the wrong, when he like Baba Nanak found Aum-Allah, Rama-Rahim, Ishwar-Khuda one and the same Reality? Then, why the noble Guru was forced to sit on the red-hot iron plates and burning sand was poured upon him? How long Nature shall allow barbarian to torture earth? That is to be seen!

Baba Nanak, the apostle of integration is a unique blend of spirituality and secularism. He is Sabda-Brahma, the light and power of the Word that variously incarnated in the nine Gurus who laid their lives for the eternal dharma of the Land. That power is not static, but the dynamic force of creation that incarnates again and again as the ages and the call of suffering Earth at the crucial turn of the history demand. India is not

really "free." The spiritual democratic order is being choked, strangled to death by the mammoth of mercenaries, erratic and barbaric with their agenda of 'Jihad' against unity in variety. The power of integration as symbolized in 'Khalsa' can alone counteract and defeat the forces of disintegration. Unfortunately, the drive of 'Khalsa' has got arrested within the obscure and ignorant walls of communal ego. Our position is like the blind poet (Milton) who in the wide world and dark, is helpless to do nothing except "to stand and wait," till the Grace descends, and out the sacrifice of Gurus a phoenix birth takes place and new Khalsa is born. It is the fight and power of the Divine that alone can end barbarism; bring home to men's business and bosom the light and beauty of the three godheads of democracy—Equality-Fraternity-Freedom that the Satanic powers, the sons of Darkness try to thwart, eclipse and destroy. In the next chapter we shall find that absolute Liberty without Equality is non-existent in this world of interdependence. Liberty to be true need to be guarded by justice that aims against unjust and unnecessary inequalities prevailing in the social and the political system that fail to provide equal training, opportunity for all to grow and prosper. Liberty cannot exist unless reconciled with Equality. So long as "man individual and aggregate lives by egoism, so long as he cannot undergo a great spiritual and psychological change and rise beyond mere communal association" he cannot taste the joy of freedom and understand why he is shouting: "Hamay Azadi Chahiyay." It is only by realizing the principle involved in 'fraternity,' the feeling of brotherhood of mankind that infuses life, gives meaning to Liberty and Equality. Fraternity, the universal brotherhood is an experience of inner oneness which no "mechanical, social, political, religious has ever created or can create; it must take birth in the soul and rise from hidden and divine depths within." Freedom that divides the country in an armed rebellion of deeds that loudly shouts only brings a broken heart and a dishonoured grave as 'Azadi' is

"Like some dread Sphinx, half patent to the eye,

Half veiled in formidable secrecy."²⁴

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Chapter - VII

UN-SECULARISATION OF KASHMIR: "HAMAY AZADI CHAHIYAY"

Ever since the life-force began pulsating in the Earth atmosphere there has burst forth out of her deep recesses an urge, a cry for freedom—freedom from the shackles of the past, freedom from bondage and slavery to find ampler individual and collective expansion, a progressive growth, a steady march towards an ever-widening circumference of human perfection. This urge native to every living form is an ever-recurring pressure on Life to accept the progressive change—or else wither away, dry and depart—to pattern; reorganize its social behaviour in a wider mould of national life evolving towards a global brotherhood.

The cry of the Secessionist, welling up from the dark Inconscient of mankind is unlike the urge of the Earth. It is an irrational impulse of barbarism to communalize the Valley in the blackest shade and kill secularism and lay straggling hands around the neck of Indian democracy. This they call "freedom." The shouts "Hamay Azadi Chahiyay" thundering in the valley have created storm in the whole state, throwing challenge to the national leadership. This misuse of freedom to the verge of pervasion cannot—in the long run—bring victory, but a defeat ending in self-annihilation. For this is the "hour of God," a "new light," that has touched the Earth is causing turmoil throughout the world. At this "hour" the opposition of the dark powers for their survival is natural, and the unsecularisation of Kashmir is the outcome of such opposition to the Earth's urge for global brotherhood.

The 'gold' of freedom they presume is to be obtained by setting the paradise to flames. The Quran Says: "whomsoever He willeth, Allah sendeth astray and whomsoever He willeth, He setteth on a straight path." Who is responsible for leading people astray to give a catastrophic blow to secularism? Not Pakistan but we ourselves. Pakistan like Satan

lays hand on our weakness, by tempting those who are of the Devil's party. Why the valley of flowers, love and peace is set ablaze by the flames of communal hate and barbaric violence, and a tale of untold misery and torture is written on the forehead of innocent masses? The web of relationship, love and fellow feeling that sustained our social life has been stung by the political scorpions, poisoned by the serpents of fundamentalism, eaten by the pests of communalism spouting lust, hate and anarchy. Is not this moneybag filthy politics of intrigues, opportunism, treachery, self-interest and blind ambitions of the politicians responsible for this tragic conflict in Jammu and Kashmir State? Has not this egocentric, power hungry leadership of the Indian politics—too weak, divided, indecisive and timorous—brought the country to such a pass that we feel the pulse of some imminent catastrophe? Has not the bottom-line of this low politics degraded morality of the politicians, administrators, courts etc perverted democracy (which is our faith) into what Nietzsche calls a "rule of the herd," or what Plato terms a "cult of incompetence," in which votes are counted, and not weighed to justify right is might and not to uphold the barbaric rule of might is right? For, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, "Terrorism thrives on administrative violence and injustice that is the only atmosphere in which it can thrive and grow."¹

As canker to rose, so is this diseased political life for the country. This political life is more dangerous and damaging than the Britishers, whom the politicians imitate ruthlessly to divide and rule the country. It is a conglomeration of parties divided in groups, daggers drawn at each other, fighting for personal power with all unscrupulousness and rank opportunism. The leaders of these parties are ideologically bankrupt, ambivalent, parochial, rabidly communal, casteist and defectors of no consequence. That is why, Assam continues to be the major political problems; the volcano in Punjab has not cooled down, and Kashmir unsecularised (the Kashmiri Hindus driven out of their habitats) is on fire. It has been turned into—

..... A darkling plain,
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and fight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

—Matthew Arnold: *Dover Beach*

The paradox of the Kashmiri Pandits is a part of the bewildering global situation. It is a dilemma in which India as a whole and the sensitive men of democratic values throughout the world are caught in helplessness for the survival of civilized life on earth. It is to be or not to be. To 'be' means to live and grow in a spiritual secularism, that has been made a myth with the onslaught of anti-democratic forces in the valley. The mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley did not happen all on a sudden. It had a long preparation and its background goes even beyond the partition. Mr. Feroz Bhakhat has boldly expressed the truth about the genocide of Kashmiri Pandits from time to time at the hands of the Muslim rulers in Kashmir.² In the words of Christopher Thomas: "Fault line Kashmir-II, "a paradox overlays the tragedy of KPs," the aborigines of Kashmir, who are running for survival like aliens in their own country. Their running for life and rest is a long saga of sufferings, that began the day, when in the 14th century, Sikunder the Iconoclast thought killing Hindus and smashing their temples was a fine sport. It was their attachment to homeland, the instinct of survival and rest that they were able to return after Sikunder died.

The poor pandits from 1947 onwards, had lived the life of second class citizens—marginalised, discriminated, humiliated and persecuted by the government, as well as by the local religious fanatics nurtured in the 'madaras' culture of totalitarian, exclusivist ideologies, that have pushed to the wall the plural tradition of the country. The psychological trauma (in which they had been living) deepened and intensified in the months spanning late 1989 and early 1990. A frightening scenario in the state, like a whirlwind engulfed Kashmir with violence, horror and carnage. The wave of turmoil in 1989-90 took a new turn; the warriors of Islam the fundamentalist group instigated by mentors across the border aided overtly and covertly by the politicians, bureaucrats and police began harassing KP's systematically, threatening them in the print media to face "dire consequences." In his "Fault line Kashmir" (299 page), Christopher Thomas reckoned the fact that after such fatal warnings, when notices were pinned on doors and in the streets, there could be no question of staying because "Kashmir Mein Rehna Hoga, Allah Akbar Kahna Hoga," i.e. you must recite Allah Akbar if you want to live in Kashmir. Those who yet continued to live in fear and false hope, the obsessed 'Jihadis' tortured and brutally murdered them by hanging some on trees, killing

others inside rice drums, strangulating and sawing them on the brand saw machines and to some immolating alive.

Thus, they thought this to be the way to *Āzādi*, the Nizame Mustafa, the kingdom of God—forcing entire Hindu minority to flee like frightened victims—to be celebrated by burning, looting and occupying the Hindu houses. Christopher Thomas laments that “there can be no example in the modern history when 250,000 people were herded out of their homes with hardly a squeak of international reaction.” Even in the Hindu area Jammu, “the Brahmins, the elite caste, living hardly better than the lowest untouchable outcaste in his hovel,” as Christopher states.

In all probability, the mild Hindu minority is driven once for all from the land of their forefathers. In the 14th century, they were the victims of a single person Sikunder the Iconoclast, but this time they are the victims of one of the “most complex disputes” on earth. This migration has scattered them in the crowd of the country, to be absorbed in the bosom of Mother India or be mingled into the consciousness of Mother earth, as what Mother is to the child Earth is to all. Who knows, the culture of the community, having undergone fire-sacrifice of the ancients, may have a phoenix-birth, invoking the Flaming Sword to descend, break the “iron law” and “change Nature’s doom by his lone Spirit’s power.” Then the beauty of the paradise shall take the form of a song singing of the everlasting meaning of Reality revealing in myriad forms of Beauty. Then alone a thing of beauty can be a joy forever. The dragging of Hindus does not matter; for there yet lingers in them some grace that protects them, helps them to overcome difficulties by adapting themselves to the life’s crushing situations and carve their way through Nature’s ordeals. They are “highly educated” community; their presence can be “only a boon,” and an asset to the land where they settle.

Dear Muslim brothers of Kashmir, the question is how far (according to the words of Prophet) your “*Āzādi*” is justified when, it clearly transforms human beings into frenzied abnormal beings, chasing out of the birth-place the harmless withering minority of idol-worshippers; demolishing their venerable places and grabbing their properties? I don’t blame you for killing, and forcing these weak “individualistic” and “snobbish” Kashmiri Pandits to make them flee from their habitats. For the reward of Ignorance, Weakness and Fear is suffering and death. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, “Weakness is sin, Ignorance is Sin,

and Fear is the only sin to fear." Nature brings what one deserves. The Pandit is crushed by the 'asura,' the Dark force when he is bereft of 'brahma-tejas,' the power of "tapas," the flaming power of the Word, invoking the supreme Shakti at the time of crisis. Besides, there is no Purusharama, or Vashistta among them to create force to fight the Sons of Darkness. At this fatal hour, even the presence and power of Guru Teg Bahadur is denied by the destiny, for the Guru's Sikhs have forgotten the pledge given to the Motherland. They too are the victims of the "warriors of Islam." Actually, you have not killed them, made them homeless beggars, compelling them to run away in fear from the abode of Mother Shakti and Lord Amarnath, but their 'Karma,' the law of action-reaction, their adharmā and perhaps the curse of their God and Goddesses and Rishis has made them suffer to the verge of extinction.

Killing of Hindus, devastation of secular elements and Islamization of Kashmir has extinguished "a ray of hope and light" that Mahatma Gandhi had seen in Kashmir. Now, it is the city of temples going the Kashmir way. Gandhi's non-violence in Jammu is sitting on the simmering volcano, ready to be exploded, the moment it gains momentum with the invading communal frenzy, that is let loose by the fierce tide of terrorism as its onslaughts made on secularism and peace in Kashmir are complete. The people in the age group of 14 to 25 indoctrinated in Islamic fundamentalism (which is other than Islam had meant in Kashmir for 600 years) have entered the socially and politically decision making process. To this group the communal harmony, the backbone of the life of Kashmir and its culture is a blasphemy and heresy. This erosion of Sufic culture in the new generation is a last nail to the coffin with countless graves, singing the dirges of the desert sands of the past.

Kashmiri Muslims lost the corner stone of their culture, the moment they rejected the joy of living in togetherness in relatedness of which every flower, bird, plant, mountain, and animal living in the lap of Nature sing, and in which the sun and moon and planets are bound in a knot of attraction and relation. The Quran tells us, "the sun is not allowed to overtake the moon, nor does the night outpace the day, each in own orbit runs." By disallowing a non-Muslim to run around his "his own orbit" and by overtaking his hearth and home, you destroy your harmony, and consequently suffer to live in fear, hate, suspicion and insecurity. The dragging of non-Muslims is darkening the secular beauty of valley and

a great threat and challenge to the democratic powers of the world. It shakes the very foundation of India's democracy. Does it indicate Muslims cannot be a part of harmony, which is the basis of democracy? Their frantic efforts at the Islamisation of the state and to separate it from the Indian republic to create another Pakistan within the country or the dream of merging with Pak are illusive cries from the sphere of sorrow. Hardly can that bring God's bounty as being obscured by the smoke of darkness. To quote Christopher, "Kashmir represents for India a repudiation of the two-nation theory-one for Muslims, one for the rest that inspired the creation of Pakistan. To give up Kashmir would be to deny that Kashmir could live peacefully and without discrimination in secular India."

Hindus had steadily been leaving Kashmir since Sheikh Abdullah took over in 1947 as he had his Muslim support in injecting an "Islamic flavour into local politics" entering into Mosques that were, "routinely used as centres of secessionist activity." Out of the Mosque-Madrassa culture were born the "self-proclaimed messiahs of Muslims," fully indoctrinated, dedicated and committed cadres of Jamaat-e-Islami shouting for freedom from Indian democratic system of governance in Kashmir. In fact, the fundamental organization rejecting all that is Indian or pro-Indian are the ideological parent of Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone and APHC. Mr. Lone as the Education Minister in the Qasim Government, "packed education institutions, universities besides administration and judiciary with Jamaat Cadres. These Cadres exercised a powerful influence on media, radio and cultural academy."³ The Muslim United Front (MUF) of the Jamaat entered into Parliament and Assembly with an oath to affirm their faith in the State and Indian Constitution, yet using unconstitutional means in elections (from 1972 to 1987), by propagating anti-national views, using Islamic flag and holy Koran to seek votes. When the candidates (MUF) in their funeral shrouds conveyed their vow to "do or die," it electrified the masses with religious fanaticism and an example was set for the coming generations of Kashmir Muslims - one of dishonesty, deceit, falsehood to emulate. Have not they, writes the correspondent, "put a question mark on honesty of Kashmiri, or his reliability and trustworthiness on his dependability. Is this part of Nazam-e-Mustafa that is being offered to Kashmir?"⁴

Indira Garidhi-Sheikh Abdullah accord was much disliked by the Jamaat, as it meant ascending of the Sheikh, who considered the Jamaat the biggest single enemy of Kashmir and Kashmiryat. The fundamentalist schools 'Madrassas' in the Valley and Doda district breed enemies of democracy and human progress. Dr. Farooq Abdullah without mincing words described them as "mercenary Schools," instead of being "missionary Schools" of human welfare and forward looking vision. Ever since Independence they have been indoctrinating young minds, poisoning their brains with a heavy dose of fundamentalism which has fanned the flames of hatred and intolerance due to the "ill-effects of third-rate education," of the Islamic schools, teaching students that material advancement, intellectual development, socialism, democracy, secularism and family planning were anti-Islam. So they "continue to produce only terrorists and gun-wielders who do not fit into modern civilization." As such, "they can never be an asset to any nation or state ever progress," is an impartial observation of Dr. Farooq Abdullah.

Now, cast a penetrating look at the conditioned minds of Hurriyat leaders. Are not they wanton victims of Pak machinations? If so, then "talking to them means talking to Pakistan." Is not then Dr. Farooq right in describing them "black crows," for their toeing "the line fed from across the borders" and their being on the pay roll of Pakistan? So are other fundamentalist organizations, financed and sustained by foreign funds. Their commitment to 'Jihad' has become part of the Kashmir psyche. Alas! For the Kashmiri psyche, there is no rest or respite from the wild nightmares of Jihad. The Kashmiri Muslim has been under constant barrage of "psychedelic" the moment Qadir's call for 'Jihad' resulted in the communal conflagration of 1931. Since then, the call for 'Jihad' has been accelerated and intensified by the subsequent sinister callers, who keep on celebrating a communal carnage as an opening for "freedom." The type of 'Azadi' Pakistan wants for Kashmiris to attain is: "communalism in the blackest shade," a religious monopoly imposed by the trained and armed fundamentalists. Yet, it cannot be denied that in the functioning of these "mercenary Schools," there is no hand or concurrence (if not directly) of the government. The local leaders, national politicians and the foreign nations enjoy the warmth in keeping Kashmir burning to grind their axes, and would not allow these embers to cool down. The self-centered local leaders with their bills, resolutions, autonomies keep masses tossing in confusion, while the foreigners add

'Josh' to feed the flames of 'Jihad.' The locals cater to their personal ends, and Politicians with their check and balance policy keep themselves swinging in "musical chairs," while the foreigners with flowery smiles come with serpent hearts to feed their national ambitious and vested interests.

Democracy, which is our faith, has not become a palpable reality that binds each with all in equal terms without any consideration of caste and creed, party and community. There is no sense of sacrifice and social belonging in politicians who brag to be the leaders of the nation. They have made democracy a mode of imposing rule over the multitudes by handful cunning persons. It is a mobocracy, not a democracy that is driving politicians into jungles of darkness to hunt in packs. Their compulsion of immoral compromises tend to see man as an animal "red in tooth and claw" to recall Tennyson's Darwinian phrase. Therefore, they hear in people's voice nothing more than "an animal roar," to use Plato's phrase. They being habituated to "double think," "double-talk and double-act" have not only reduced democracy to a farce, but have made themselves political clowns and a menace. In their double-dealing, they call themselves the saviors of Muslims instigating them for the "Islamic Jihad," yet, secretly divert enormous wealth from funds for the 'Jihad' into private coffers. Is there anything Islamic, or any ideology involved in their unprincipled, unethical conduct, activities and assets? Why, then through the decades, they have misinterpreted and twisted Kashmiris cry for justice and economic equality as a cry for Islam? Have not they thrown Kashmir in troubled waters only to fish out their vested interests, satisfy their crude desires?

The weak-kneed centre leadership is a great culprit of Democracy responsible for unsecularisation of the Valley, and now helplessly watching the agitated scenario of Jammu going the Kashmir way. The weak and selfish politicians have always succumbed, acquiesced, and compromised whenever there has been the cry of "Islam in danger." Democracy ought to work on principles, and it is political hypocrisy, deceit and duplicity to adopt unprincipled appeasement policy, irrational compromises and favours to placate pressure groups controlled by an overtly "goonda" nexus. It has always proved counter-productive. The appeasement policy, unlike the vision of true statesmanship, is narrow skin-deep consciousness of politicians who act with what Kuldip Nayer

calls "irrational motives." In democracy: whom to appease and whom to favour, as all are one in a free brotherhood of equals. Favour or appeasement for selfish or communal reasons goes against the psychology of Indian Nationalism as it opposes the spirit of democracy. In the "power politics," there is "sheer opportunism"⁵ of men of no character, no "policy" or "promise," but a strategy to check (appease) here, balance (favour) there and compromise in between with skill and shrewdness to win votes.

It is the politics bereft of "convictions" and "commitments." The policy of appeasement based on the "conveniences" of the politicians has for the last decades encouraged Mohammedan element by discriminating and depressing the people of other two regions of the state representing truly the spirit of secularism. This favour and compromise to purchase a Mohammedan vote has proved costly for the Nation as it has unsecularised Kashmir, and is tearing fast the web of secularism in other parts of the state. In the democratic order of a single and indivisible Indian nation, Hindus and Mohammedans are a single political unity equal before law and before God; therefore, it is undemocratic or unlawful to appease one at the cost of other, providing one all the opportunities while the other struggles for basic necessities. Has not this 'appeasement' and 'compromise' given a long rope to the majority Muslims to rule and crush the minority on the basis of their being favoured minority in India? In a strict democratic sense, the terms 'minority,' or 'majority' are irrelevant and no majority in a particular state is allowed to say; "We shall be the ruler and you our servants. Our harf (word) will be law, you will have to obey?" This is what has happened in Kashmir; the result of placating the majority has wiped out the trace of Secular elements. This false diplomacy to divide Hindu-Muslim is dangerously catastrophic for those who are of the Devil's party: out for the two, it is either the "harmony of contraries" or a battle for Light.

Meanwhile, the Paradise is burning; the singe of the advancing flames is felt in the whole state. The local political consciousness has taken full advantage of the cry of 'Jihad,' the religious polarization, which the mullahs have exploited to unsettle the noble psyches. The children of the soil instead of cultivating themselves as the flowers of the Garden, wafting different fragrance, and bright hues in the atmosphere have been

forced and conditioned to become insensitive killers of peace, destroyers of the prosperity and beauty of the Valley. Kashmir looks as backward and tumultuous as the past centuries of dark medieval times. The common man is helpless for his weakness, want and poverty; his life is like a figure on a chessboard in between power politics and fanatic Mullah. Otherwise, the common man has no interest in creation of new countries, as his prime occupation is his survival to earn a living in peace, un-intimidated by perpetrators of terrorism and militancy.

Poorly educated, ill-informed masses are easily mobilized and hypnotized through hysterical speeches and campaigns for the assertion of their "religious identity" separate from other communities. This domination of a community through obfuscation, falsehood, and outright intimidation is barbaric, undemocratic and inhuman. The noses lead the masses without any awakening in the general Kashmiri populace. In their behaviour there is certainty in uncertainty, to make us indecisive to figure out when they behave in a cool and silent manner over every militant strike, and march for a hot hartal on each lapse by the security forces. Yet, in their remaining cool and silent, there is a psychological clue for a healthy change in the lake of sorrow. In their complex psychological behaviour the two extremes jostle together to make them to be either innately innocent or one intimately involved; yet innovative enough to escape accountability on every occasion.

In all probability (as it appears), Kashmiri Muslims are utterly bewildered to the point of repentance. The outsiders have hijacked their chimera of 'freedom,' whose malicious designs have converted it into an Islamic crusade. Caught in the 'Azadi trap,' the people are rendered helpless and powerless even though they disagree. Entangled in the cruel confusion the frustration has seized their heart and they cry and twist in the agony of their minds to see the paradise in flames; the Sufi secular spiritual tradition unsecularised. The vernal woods and deep valleys of the Paradise echo no more the ancient chanting and singing idolater, unknown heroes and different religious interpretations that separate Kashmir from Sunni Muslim majority of the subcontinent.

An average Kashmiri if left free from terror or pressure of religious chauvinism, will prefer Indian democracy to any other rule. It is bad luck for the masses to have fallen in the clutches of narrow-minded, undemocratic, illiterate political and religious leadership. Therefore, the

mass mentality, the make up of peoples character could not be developed on the democratic principles to cultivate ethical and social personality of the state, in terms of the national soul evolving towards a global sense in man. By making Kashmir a Muslim issue, the ignorant and motivated political and religious leadership, misguide and pervert the youth. They exploit their feelings; lead them astray into Madrassas for programming and training in subversive activities. "Kashmir," in the sensible analysis of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, "far from being a Muslim issue for a Muslim," is the problem of harmony of true Islam with the national culture like different varieties of flower beds in a Shalimar Garden following the holy plan of Nature, to make unity express in diversity or diversity singing of unity – one God and one Humanity. Kashmir, in the words of Maulana is "purely an Indian problem," like Assam affairs "not an exclusively Christian, but a National problem to be treated and solved in a national way within the generalized Indian frame work." Again, Maulana's prudence strikes the point of truth that "no individual's or community's thinking should be divergent from the mainstream, nationalist thought."

It was the vision of "nationalist thought" of Indian spiritual secularism growing into a divine democracy, that inspired and enamoured the nationalist and patriotic Muslims to stay in their homeland. They repudiated two-nation theory as contradiction in terms. Jinnah, who was bolstered up by the Britishers, did not want so much the independence of India, as Sri Aurobindo puts, "independence for Muslims and if possible rule over India."⁶ Contrary to the facts, Jinnah advocated the theory of two nationalities for his purposes; forgetting the fact that "more than 90% of the Indian Mussalmans are descendants of converted Hindus and belong as much to the Indian nation as Hindus."⁷ Jinnah himself was a descendant of a converted Hindu, named Jinahbhai, and many of the most famous Mohammedan leaders have a similar origin.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, one of the tallest freedom fighters opposed Jinnah's formation of Pakistan as a "brilliant device," of the British bureaucracy to reshuffle the constituent elements of India politics based on creed and caste. Needless to say that the "brilliant device" continue to be dangerously utilized by the communal, ambivalent, ideologically bankrupt political parties hungering after power and pelf. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was shocked by the partition of hate and separation. On

the eve of independence he shed tears at the tragic-partition. As he felt that this step would be fatal to the country, tantamounting to a new kind of destruction, which would forever bedevil India's newfound freedom. The 'formation' of Pakistan went against the fundamentals of human nature, and the spirit of true religious feeling that binds and unites rather than divides and separates. It was soon revealed in Jinnah's Pakistan. The treatment met by the minorities was worse, being relegated to third-rate citizens, harassed and tortured by the subsequent government. Jinnah's successors had no belief in secularism. The feigned secular posture they maintain "is an attempt to allay western fears of a fundamentalist military regime in a country, which has been heavily indoctrinated and brutalized in the name of religion."⁸

It is owing to Indian constitution committed to secularism that "even after partition," writes Irfan Hussain in the leading Pakistan daily "Dawn," "India continues to have a significant Muslim population." It has falsified Jinna's two-nation theory, "weakened the principle on which Pakistan was created. The questionable premise was further eroded by the separation of East Pakistan in 1971." See the fate of Shia Muslim minority and unwanted Mohajirs (who in their religious frenzy left India their motherland) for Pakistan. If religion could have defined a state or a nation, then there should have been no massacre of Bengalis by Punjabis in 1971, the regular killing of Mojahirs in Karachi, the animosities between Sindhis and Punjabis, the continuing intransigence of tribal areas in the Northwest? Not Pakistan only, but the whole "Islamic world" is in a turmoil as religion has not cemented people in a Nation. To force out-dated religious ideology on the men of evolving scientific age cannot create a nation. It has only tarnished the spirit of religion; turned pure Islam into a barbaric creed of warring hordes.

In the "Islamic world," a part of humanity is caught in the quagmire of barbaric national ideologies, presenting an image of bloodshed and suffering. It can be statistically established that Muslims have done great harm to the 'Lesson' that is the Koran in fighting among themselves, shedding more Muslim blood than non-Muslims in their wars against Muslims countries. Who were killed in the wars between Iran and Iraq? Perhaps, Saddam Hussain has killed more Muslims than anyone in the history of the world. How many poor and innocent were killed in a

seemingly endless civil war for ten years in Afghanistan? What is the fault of Kashmiri Muslims killed during militancy in the state, and those being killed everyday at every militants strike? Has Talbian's "true Islamic Values" improved the fate of Muslims, or added any beauty and grace to the fair name of Islam? How many are dying in the rivalries between Saudi Arabia and Iran? Who is responsible for the loss of precious lives involved in the bitterness between Libya and Egypt? Then, we have the killings of thousands upon thousands in Algeria; the terrorists trained in Sudan are flung at other Islamic countries. Such is the ghastly, grim and tragic spectacle of the 'Islamic world.'

This grim tragic crisis in the 'Islamic world' is due to dishonour and misuse of religion for political and selfish reasons. According to this "defunct two nation-theory" observes Irfan, "we Muslims said we could not live with Hindus and created Pakistan, then we said we could no longer live with Bengalis, and Bangladesh was the result. Now Sunnis are saying they cannot live with Shias. Where will it stop? Where indeed?" It so happens when, under the temptation of Satan, we make religion a matter of imposition: then it takes the form of extremism, begets frantic fundamentalism that distorts and corrupts the pure form of religion.

"And all man's ghastly company of fears
Are born of folly that believes the span
Of life the limit of immortal man."

The Indian based intellectuals, the men of sense in Muslim community need to do some introspection; open their eyes to see through the tricks and ideologies of the self-appointed Pakistani leaders; the damage the highly professional and tightly clad core of terrorist operatives are causing to Islam and its cultural glory in India. Just as Jinnah's separation from India was motivated by his egoistic ambition, so was the creation of Bangladesh tinged by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's ambition that ruthlessly denied the Prime Ministership to Sheikh Mujibur Rehman. Dr. Jitender Singh, in his just evaluation points out that "the history of Pakistan is motivated less by ideological belief and more by political expediency as is the case of Jammu and Kashmir." Therefore, the so-called "Kashmir experts," should stop playing with fire, the flames can engulf them too. Besides throwing dust into the eyes of truth tantamounts to self-blindness

and darkness that engulfs generations. Dealing in falsehood is the way of Satan leading to hell and destruction. Dr. Jitender Singh, a dignified journalist with conviction winds up his thought with a couplet of Sahir Ludhianvi, a warning to "Kashmir experts" and "intellectuals":

"Woh Waquet Gaya,
Who Dour Gaya,
Jab Do Quaumon Ka Naaraa Tha,
Jinka Maksad Batwaara Tha."

The Muslims in India (if they are sincere citizens) have to decide how to come out of the dilemmas and contradiction of the Islamic World confronting Indian Nationalism, that gives them freedom to glorify Islam in terms of her cultural principle of 'unity in diversity.' They have to cope with their predicament, as India has the largest population of Muslims in the world – larger than Pak or all the Arab countries put together. So the sensible Indian Muslim, Zafar Jung, rightly says that it is the "responsibility" of the Muslim leadership to dispel "myths that promote communalism." Only then "the walls of distrust between Hindus and Muslims"¹⁰ can be broken, and the age-old Sufic-spiritual atmosphere regained in the paradise lost. To quote Zafar Jung: "It is time that Muslims rethink their strategies" and give up "their confrontationist attitude," the fear and suspicion and hate leading "the community to near disaster."

The call of Time-spirit for the Muslim leadership is for awakening to the glory of God in man, the power of peace and brotherhood, which is Islam. It is for them to make a right decision, reflect anew on their life of "freedom" in terms of the psycho-spiritual heritage of the Himalayan culture of Kashmir with its two strong arms of Jammu-Ladakh, stretched together in embracing Mother India as an epitome of global brotherhood. It is the failure of Leadership, its selfishness that instigates community to adopt devilish strategies of violence, revolt, lawlessness and destruction; that only bring the prisons of poverty, backwardness, illiteracy and tears of widows and orphans – never freedom, joy, prosperity and cultural affluence. Let good sense prevail; reflection dawn in the mind of Muslim leadership to make them see in the Light of truth-thought and truth-feeling, and find a *modus operandi* to regain the lost balance of the Paradise. Already, the peace and prosperity of the two

Regions of the State have been jeopardized. They too strain and clamour for freedom from the rule of repression, the atmosphere of terror, state of uncertainty and chaos created by the religious fundamentalism fanning the flames of "communal frenzy." It has engendered extreme fear in non-Muslims, giving a forceful impression that Muslims are very vengeful and violent people.

The youth of the community pinning for what is not is disillusioned, disenchanted by the directionless leadership (both religious and political) that has failed to understand their aspiration, needs of education, mental development and psychic evolution. In the words of Firoz Bakht, the aggressive, ambitious leadership "has completely lost both its voice and utility." Can these hollow-headed leaders, politicians with pompous speeches at their belly-cheer functions and glittering inaugurations "represent masses?" Are not they a disgraceful lot of rank opportunists, the "civilized men," to recall the words of Bulwer Lytton, who can live without conscience, but cannot help to cheer themselves with a drink and Kashmiri "Wazvan?" As such, they "do not represent masses," says Zafar Jung. Their back-look has dimmed the passion for modern education. Consequently, their in-look in man's nature and life is closed fast with the darkness of the barbaric ages of dreary desert sands.

The Muslim leadership ought to have ability, the intellectual caliber to question the clergy, "weigh" and "consider," and then only "chew" and "digest." This way alone they can kindle reformatory zeal, liberate masses from the falsehood and ignorance, so that religion lives and evolves with the spirit of the Age, informing mankind to live in peace and collective prosperity. Islam, for its survival as a civilized branch of culture in the cultural tree of humanity, ought to create (by the power the Prophet) a new harmony in the relationship of man, Nature and God – the triune principles of existence. Instead, the leadership misuses Freedom by "grovelling and groping for quotas and special favours" and its vested programmes. It does not want to break open the prisons, come out of "the veils and ghettos" and inhale the ample breath of freedom in the idea of Nationalism singing of universal oneness and brotherhood.

It is this "separation" of Muslims that grievously hinder a "process of rationalizing the relation with Hindus as both share a common lot,"

voices a Muslim brother, Firoz Bakht Ahmed and with the pulse of Indian Nationalism rightly says: "A Hindu of Kolkata is more a kin to a Bengali Muslim than a Delhi Hindu, a Maharashtrian Muslim sharing more in common with Mumbaite Hindu than a Punjabi Muslim." How have then, Kashmiri Hindus turned aliens and 'Kafirs' by Kashmiri Muslims, to be killed and driven from their ancestral homes? Is not it a violation of the law divine, the sin against the faith to be awarded with suffering and destruction? To quote Ahmad again, "Hindus and Muslims in their respective states are like a beautifully spun harmony on the Indian fabric." While going against this "harmony," is to invite the curse of God who created man in His own image. For, in an organic working of Nature, each community is bound (for its own happiness) to work for the whole by contributing to the perennial stream of national culture. Nation, in turn can prosper if it contributes to the world culture. In this spiritual secular scheme of Nature, each expresses all, and all is for each as Emerson puts it:

"All are needed by each one,
Nothing is fair or good alone."

The purpose of variety, difference and multiplicity is to make us glimpse a multi-mooded expression of the principle of Unity for which and in which they exist and function. Talents differ, names and forms vary; we cannot belittle or disgrace anything for all is well and wisely put and arranged by the power of God. One community sacrifices something for the other, which in turn lives by the same sacrifice. In this cosmic order it is not possible to hate or destroy anything as sings Emerson:

"All sorts of things and weather,
Must be taken together,
To make up a year
and a sphere."

Maulana Mohd Ali Johar's wise counsel for the people of Kashmir is that they should not be misled by the fanatics (fundamentalists), but follow democratic and peaceful ways to attain their objective of peace and prosperity. In the words of Zafar Jung, "Muslims have a unique opportunity in India. They should seriously reassess the situation and

do a little bit of introspection and self-criticism. They are partners in power along with Hindus, Sikhs and others. They should build up pressure on the Muslim leadership to shun the politics of confrontation and instead opt for the politics of cooperation."¹¹ Moreover, in this age of inter-dependence, it is not possible for any community, region, or nation to live in isolation by severing its natural bonds with other communities and regions. In this scheme of plurality, the survival of one is closely and inextricably knit with the existence and survival of other forms of creation.

At the very core of Islam, there is an emphasis on Universalist and non-exclusive attitude. The Quran states this in clear terms that Mohammed is "one who warnath and for every nation there is a (divine) guide" (sura 18-5-37). In order to maintain the law of harmony, "unto every people," the Almighty has directed a "messenger to teach them to worship God (sura 16-5-37)." The kingdom of God on Earth or Nizame Mustafa can be made real only through Self-sacrifice, worship of Truth, laying aside false claims, casting away all egoistic, narrow, selfish desires into the flames of knowledge or 'Ilm.' The prophet Mohammed stresses the importance of life to come, the order of new humanity to be brought about by destroying the forces of ignorance and falsehood that rule humanity. 'Nizami Mustafa,' the kingdom of God is first realised within the hearts of men, as nothing can be real in life that is not made real in spirit. It demands from us the conquest of the hearts and minds of people through love, knowledge, goodwill, service, sympathy and understanding. Therefore, it is imperative "thou shalt love thy neighbours as thyself" - not to drag and kill him, as injuring others means injuring yourself. Otherwise, it is Nizame-gratifa of anarchy and confusion of gun culture. The prophet Mohammed was accustomed to show towards people of other faith firm attitude of tolerance and goodwill. Christians were even allowed to keep their idols. Once the bottle of wine of a Jew was broken by a Muslim and was immediately got replaced by the prophet Mohammed. He even forgave the Jewess who tried to poison him.

The Muslims are "Indians by choice," and in this "choice" lurks our love for the Musulman brother, in whom, "Narayan dwells and to him too our Mother has given a permanent place in her bosom."¹² If you worship not the God of Love but the God of Jealously, the history shall repeat the

tragic effects of intolerant and exclusive truth. The history of India is not the history of Aryan or non-Aryan; nor is it the history of Brahmins and Muslims taken together. We accept and assimilate noble thoughts coming from all directions. Even, Christ is for us an "Indian yogi," and Christianity (not Churchanity) has been shown a branch of an "eastern religion transplanted on the Western soil." According to Swami Rama Tirtha, "the Bible which the European people cannot understand in the same way as the Indians, because Christ belongs to Asia, and it can be shown that he also belongs to India."¹³ The difference of opinion in a community is a healthy sign of progress and growth. It cannot create a breach of faith, divide and separate a part from the whole. Truth is a vision of sameness in difference and every patriotic Muslim feels like Zafar Jung that Kashmir is "an integral part of India." Accordingly, "it is high time," advises Firoz Bakht Ahmed, "Muslims in India understand that their existence is linked that of Hindus and that, at any cost they cannot separate themselves thinking of living in their outdated ghettos on the pretext of saving their religious identity."

"Difference of opinion," in the words of Abu Hanifa (died in 769), "in a community is a token of a divine grace," not a bone of contention in the love of brother. In the 13th century, Ibn-al-Arabi taught, "man should in pursuit of knowledge of God not seek Him through an exclusive approach by any one religion disregarding other faiths but consider all evidences accessible to man." The communal ego making 'Jihad' for freedom from the whole by neglecting the principles of equality and fraternity arrives at a competitive communalism born of secret pride and contempt for others who are unwilling to be yoked in a uniform code of conduct. The Quran tells us (xxxv, 25; xvi, 37). "For everyone of you did we appoint a Law and a way."? My "way" may be different from your way; the goal (God realization) is the same, like different rivers marching through different paths, yet singing of the sea from which they have come and into which they are running. Therefore, pay heed to the pleading of the patriotic Muslim brother, who wants you "to befriend Hindus rather to hate and kill them as 'kafir' ... strive for paths of understanding ... walk hand in hand with those Hindus who are truly secular, balanced and considerate, and there is no dearth of them."

Muslims had thought of India as their homeland for the previous one thousand years. "Originally few in number" writes Maulana

Wahiduddin Khan, "they have now increased their population to 150 million. Who are these Muslims? The majority were formerly Hindus who came to accept Islam. That is to say, that in respect of race, these Muslims are just as Indian as their Hindu counterparts." Therefore, there is nothing repugnant in the word 'Hindu,' which makes you boil in hate or scare you with a thought of "Hindu Raj." As we have seen, Hindu has nothing to do with the cults and creeds, colour and dress. It refers to every human being imprisoned in the ignorance of Nature, invaded by the barbaric ideologies of Nations. It is an eventual self-conquest and world-conquest of divinised human being 'Mard-e-hur.' In this 'Raj' or the Nizame Mustafa of elevated and illumined human beings 'Mard-e-Kamal,' Church, Mosque, Temple and Synagogue are held in a tight and passionate embrace as expressions of myriad-minded Oneness of the supreme divine.

Unfortunately, so good and intelligent Muslim leaders—both religious and liberal—still continue to think along the lines laid down by Jinnah and deliberately encourage "yellow journalism" among Muslims up to a pitch of fever. "It was in response to Jinnahs' propaganda," writes Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, "that Hindus for the first time came to think of Muslims as being separate from themselves. The extremist among the Hindus now began to doubt the Muslims' loyalty to India." Why should they have more love and sympathy for the Muslims of other countries and hate non-Muslims, their neighbours as 'Kafir' with whom they spend lives? Is not Islam and Muslims safe in India compared to Pakistan and other Islamic countries? Are not people in Pakistan butchered in mosques in the name of sects? A wise Muslim rightly said that the "future of Muslims in India was bright where they have complete freedom to preach and practice their religion." Minhaj-e-Rasool accused Pak for creating an Afghanistan like situation in Kashmir, and so complicating the existence of Muslims in India. He said (New Delhi, May 12, 2000): "both Islam and Muslims are safe in India and intrusion of Pakistan in Kashmir and its terrorist activities in the Valley have adversely affected the teachings of Islam in subcontinent." Pakistan (born of hate), is a blunder and failure of those who choosed to go against the law of Nature that makes unity in diversity a way of life, a cosmic order of creation. Even after fifty-two years of devastating partition, nearly thirty years after the creation of Bangladesh, Pakistan is a glaring mistake that gives the unequivocal lie to the two-nation theory.

If Pakistan had been the lover of Islam, the men of sense would not have condemned it for its un-Islamic activities. Maulana Mohd Ali Johar, the Vice-chairman of the highly influential and religious body, "Aalamic Roohani Markaz lashed Pakistan for un-Islamic acts in J&K."¹⁴ Slamming Pakistan for sponsoring terrorist activities, Maulana terms it "neither Islam nor Jihad" as such activities distort, misinterpret Islamic tenets, which "preach and practice eternal brotherhood." To breed terrorists is no religion at all. "Pakistan and its so-called Mujahideen, deviating from the teaching of Islam," is a prudent and matter-of-fact observation of Anjuman Minhaj-e-Rasool. Mujahideens collect money through extortion and abductions and are hard-core militants. They "have been committing sodomy with good looking Kashmiri youth, going across the border for bracing up for Jihad."¹⁵ The sources say, they are sexually perverted and under the influence of liquor abduct local girls and women and rape them. A group of militants (the sources reported), first gang raped the girl, and subsequently killed her. Again, (November 7, 2000), the three Mujahideens made an abortive attempt to rape Gulzar Bano (20) wife of Mohammed Rafiq (of Mahore) at gunpoint. When she forcibly resisted militants attempt, the brave 'Mujahideen' who were standing outside resorted to indiscriminate firing with sophisticated weapons on the pregnant woman killing her on the spot. The sources wondered what kind of 'Jihad' they were fighting for. Was their 'Jihad' just for attaining three W's, the sources questioned? ¹⁶

Can rapists, extortionists, abductors, sodomists and killers be called the warriors of Islam (or any religion), or even be called human beings who inflict untold injuries on body, mind and soul of man? According to Mr. Ali Johar, they and those who breed them "can never be part of Islam nor those who sponsor them." In sponsoring terrorism, Pakistan has nothing of the ideological or ethical passion or love of Islam or any educative, democratic and emotional sympathy, and understanding of psyche of the people of Kashmir. For Pakistan, terrorism is a global business of "lucrative returns." It is with the satanic motive, coupled with hate (in which Pakistan was born), that motivates Pak to train militants, the so-called "warriors of Islam," the dedicated "fighters" in its thousands of madrasas, murdering fellow Muslims at prayer in mosques. Pakistan's Volcano of hate bursts in streams of lava in its outright terrorism, the military sectarian strife, sending 'fighters' to

Kashmir to clear every "inch of land in the land of Islam" from 'Kafirs' and others who uphold Indian democratic, social, secular and cultural principles upon which the nation is built. This has been for Pakistan a game of extraordinary profitable enterprise.

Pakistan's original hate, its frustration of three wars; its helplessness and failure to wrest Kashmir from us has turned it revengeful and violent, waging proxy war to inflict unending miseries, sufferings and tragedies on the people of J&K state. The aim of Pakistan and her agents is not to bring prosperity, happiness, health and wealth to Kashmir (including POK) but to ruin Kashmiri Muslims; tarnish the fairy-faced-image of Islam in Kashmir. Pakistan's own people is an image of humanity in ruins, the cast away Pok and Mujahirs live in a hell of despotic rule of an unsecular society, in which the minorities pine for a breath of freedom and wither away and fade.¹⁷ In a queer pitch they call themselves as messiahs of Muslims in J&K. They are like Satan quoting the Book; giving religious sanctions to the acts of spreading hatred, sectarian terrorism and global terrorism. Islam makes no distinction between Sunni and Shia, yet Pak brand terrorism and Islam targets Shia Muslim worshippers by throwing grenades on the religious congregation.

Is it an exaggeration to call Pakistan the "American protégé" ruled by "three A's" – Army-Allah-America? He is perpetrating all un-Islamic acts with the cry of Allah and America is a satanic temptation that encourages, pampers Pakistan to go his own way to raise Army of Islamic warriors, fancying "the land of Kashmir is exclusively for the Muslims of Kashmir." Labouring under the falsehood, Pakistan is hostile to the safety and interests of the Muslims in India whose peace, happiness, and prosperity its falsehood jeopardizes. Nonetheless, Pak leaders and their agents with their firm determination have achieved the first step of their type of 'Azadi,' as was voiced in a printed document of the 'Tanzeemul Ikhwan': "If these kafirs (Kashmiri Pandits) are found trying to return to the Valley of Kashmir, they will be taught a lesson which they have to remember till their end." This is the flaming spirit of their 'Jihad,' which in Pakistan's terminology means blood-spillage of most innocent, culminating with a brutal massacre of frightened innocent Sikhs and some remaining poor Kashmiri Pandits.

A prominent Kashmiri group in the United Kingdom rightly said that Pakistan infiltrating well-greased war-ruggadized guerrillas in the Valley "stabs Kashmir people in back." Pak is doing it with its protégés (paid agents), operating in the State and the country. They have never been the friends of people, only trouble-shooters who have thrived by fishing in the troubled waters. This is how they keep themselves centrally positioned. These messiahs, the petty-local politicians of "double-talk" and "double-act," not only live and prosper under the umbrella of "secularism," but make it a shield to practice their totalitarian and communal ideologies by working all the time to throw out, push aside the plural tradition of the country and establish the 'creed' of a barbaric past by converting the Valley of flowers and peace into the vale of tears, misery and suffering. By academically politicising religious sentiment the "positive secularism" has been systematically twisted, tortured and finally replaced by a negative secessionist or separatist. Thus, we find how the secularism in Kashmir has been "strategically flouted" and strangled. This has let loose a reign of terror in other regions of the state going the Kashmir way. Yet, we hope against hope to restore back the secular fragrance in the Valley. Herbert Spencer once remarked that by no political alchemy is it possible to get golden conduct out of leaden instincts. It is equally true that by no political alchemy it is possible to make a golden society out of leaden individuals.

Dear Muslims, you have been living in India for centuries. In your fanatic 'Jihad' not only your lives but your souls are at stake. Is not it better to fight for the universal principles of our constitution; the possibility of free religious freedom it guarantees rather be led astray by the arch-Fiend's evil designs and its paid agents. It's truism—as reported by Anjuman Minhaj-e-Rasool that "both Islam and Muslims are safe in India." Why? Because of the elusive word "Hindu" resounding with the music of unity realized in diversity, accepting million names of the Truth and diverse paths leading to it. "The outward forms of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam etc. are like different cups in which efforts have been made from time to time to offer pure and holy milk of universal love."¹⁸ This is true Hindu attitude of positive secularism discerned by Christopher Thomas in his factual judgment that: "secularism is a natural outcome of Hinduism." This is called Akar-Dili or large heartedness of the Indian spiritual vision of the Earth as 'Vasudeva Kutumbkam.' Here

I am reminded of the story of Akbar and his foster brother Koka, against whom the King used to receive complaints number of times, which he ignored and did not heed. When his well-wishers inquired of him, the reason of his ignoring the faults of Koka, treating him leniently, he replied: you do not understand me properly. There is a river of milk flowing between Koka and myself. It is impossible for me to cross this river. How can I punish him?" Wonderful! This is Akbar-Dili or large-heartedness. Akbar and Koka had both been nourished with the milk from the breast of the same Rajput lady. Dear Muslims, why this separation or difference? Your head is somewhere, heart somewhere and life somewhere. You don't grasp this truth: since the Hindus and Muslims are born in the lap of Mother India, nourished by her bounties, there is a "river of milk flowering between us." And, in our spiritually secular order of the country, Akar-dili or large heartedness is to feel "every soul is my soul, every heart is my heart."

The Muslims in India and people of Kashmir in particular, are far better placed than the people in POK who are even deprived of their fundamental rights. The World Bank estimates that 40% of Pakistanis are illiterate. Due to unscientific education of the Madrashas, the generations are steeped in orthodoxy, conservatism, boiling in hate and intolerance. Amir Hamza Qureshi (SSP), in his report written to the U.N. listed several ways in which Kashmir in India is far better off than the areas of Kashmir under Pakistan occupation, ruled and administered in the form of an "East India Company," —unheard, unattended, unfortunate people "treated worse than slaves." Living like 'slaves,' writes Qureshi "the people of Gilgit and Baltistan would never like to become a part of Pakistan."¹⁹ The SSP (senior superintendent of police) was removed after he said that Pakistan has no mandate to govern the Northern areas.

The undemocratic Pakistan is a brutal and barbarous country of feudal lords, the military rulers disrespecting human values and rights that make for a civilized man. The dignity of woman as equal in the individual and social life is quite alien to them. Consequently, the abuse against women in Pak has reached epidemic proportions. The Report of the Pakistan Human Right Commission (HRCP) states: "A woman in Pakistan was raped every three hours, every second was minor and every fourth was gang-raped." The Amnesty International reported, that two

Christian women were stripped by police officers of Jaya Bagga police station in Lahore and made to dance before them. "Perhaps, more disturbing than the prevalence of violence against women is the absolute impunity with which these crimes are committed," says Samya Burney, the main author of the 101 pages of report and researches for HRW's women's right division. Women in Pakistan have no access to health and education, no economic and political participation like Indian Muslim women who are bold enough to assert themselves as daughters of Mother India. In Pakistan, the literacy rate of women is only 25% as mostly they are made to suffer from battery, rape, burning, acid attacks and mutilation.

Contrary to this, the "Muslims" in the lap of Mother India, writes Anjuman, "are leading a prestigious life, and they occupy key positions in the democratic set-up of the country." In the free atmosphere of India, educated Muslim woman has steadily come out of her shell of conservatism and rigidity to be "competent enough to interpret the Quranic laws and does not have to fall back upon the selfish and egoistical ecclesiastics."²⁰ No more she remains an unpaid domestic servant. Dr. Tabassum Ahmed, a research analyst with the NCERT, New Delhi observes: "Muslim girls, in particular are rewriting the equations both at work and house discovering a whole new world and becoming more vocal about their rights and expectations." To the truly Indian or Hindu all women are parts of the Divine Mother and we call our country Mother India. It was Tagore who said, "Woman is at the heart of creation," and to degrade her sexually, frustrate, harass and exploit her means destruction of love, harmony, prosperity and happiness in family, society, nation and world. Men must realize that an exploited, frustrated, dishonored women can never be goodmothers; for as Benazir Bhutto said at the women's Conference in Islamabad: "Man fathers a child, woman fathers a society."

Muslims are learning to be world-wise. According to the survey conducted by the MARG (Marketing Analysis and Research Group), today's educated Muslims hardly indulge in Polygamy. It means they are beginning to comprehend what the Quran (IV/3) means in clear-cut words; "And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards women then marry one." Even at the core of Indian culture, there is a mystic

regard for the power and dignity of women. Therefore, our acceptance of common humanity binds us in a pledge to unite for fighting brutality against women, children and Nature, for making democracy a success and Secularism a living reality. The success of democracy depends, in the eradication of the fundamental forces that are anathema and inimical to the women's struggle of equality. The factors that constitute Indian Nationalism guarantee that, on the strength of their religion; Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Parsis live together "as parts of the nation and are called Indians, Hindustani or Bhartiya" rightly voices Maulana Whiduddin Khan. In the true secular strain Maulana says, "Unity in diversity is the principle which, to my way of thinking could provide a sound basis for Indian nationalism." In this attitude and spirit of Nationalism, Kashmir does not belong either to Pakistan or the separatist but to India, because, as aptly comprehended by Dr. Farooq: "India belongs to us all we must offer every sacrifice to keep its traditions in tact."

Perhaps, realization begins to dawn in the minds of sensible, liberal Muslims, that: "Jo Mangega Pakistan Usko Milega Kabristan." They begin to see that inspite of their slogans of hate and division, and inspite of the anti-human, anti-national acts and propaganda of the people, the refineness and nobility of India still looks after their needs, sending daily trucks loaded with all sorts of provisions, crossing Jawahar Tunnel to feed Muslims brothers. Is not, then "Sare Jahna Se Acha Hindustan Hamara?" While, those propagating the 'Azadi' of gun culture by proclaiming: "Our fight is in the name of Islam and for the victory of Islam" are of the Devil's party; for Islam and Muslims are prosperous and happy compared to their brothers and sisters suffering in Pakistan, Libya, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc. Does 'victory' of Islam mean killing secular liberals or imbibing the 'Lesson' which is the Quran, and becoming the 'God-intoxicated men i.e. Darwesh-e-Khuda Mast to defuse peace' or (Islam) and propagate the message of the universal brotherhood? The people of gun-culture, speaking under the guise of Islam are looking for a change to further their notoriety. They hardly comprehend that an:

Account,

Is kept in heaven and our offences,
Too heavy a load for us to bear.²¹

Not only most of the Muslims in India, but the sensible people in Pakistan, too, realize that partition has hurt them the most. Indian Muslims do not accept Pakistan arrogating to itself as the sole spokesman for the entire Muslim Community in the sub continent. This fact has been attested by the prominent Muslim leaders from all over the country (in a signed statement as reported by Daily Excelsior, 2-1-1994): "We don't envisage that four million fellow Muslim, instigated from outside on the basis of religion would secede from India on the ground that they are in majority in a small part of India." Realization must come to them, that this is no fight for freedom as much as a plunge into death and destruction. It will be too late for them to repent like the twenty year Naseer Ahmed, an Area Commander of the militant outfit 'Al-Jihad,' repenting bitterly on his decision to take to militancy. He realized (UNI August, 24 1994) Azadi (freedom) in fact a trap being used by foreign forces to lure youth into militancy to create disturbance and thereby threaten the unity of India." The other militants, nabbed by the Security forces also subscribe to the view of Naseer: "We are waging a hopeless war for 'azadi' they felt?" For, the true freedom does not lay either in segregating as an independent Islamic state (in this world of inter-dependence), or in merging in an instable Pakistan. In either case, it is to hang in between two extreme like Trishanku of the legend. Pakistan has thrown dust into the eyes of M. A. Jinnah, by falsifying his words addressed to Pak Constituent Assembly on 11 August, 1947: "You are free to go to your temple, you are free to go to your Mosque, or any other place of worship on this state of Pakistan. We are starting with the fundamental principle that we are all equal citizens of the state."

It is only in India alone Muslims enjoy freedom to the point of misuse as "equal citizens" and not like Mojahiris or people in Pok. Contrary to our democratic India, look at the unbridled hysteria of hate in the so-called Islamic republic of Pakistan, where in the blood banks, blood of Muslims and non-Muslims is being kept and priced separately. How "ridiculously inhuman" is such uncivilized, inhuman practice. Does it mean that Islam is the religion of intolerance imposing its creed with a sword, resorting to all sorts of subversive acts that inscribe "harrowing tales of woes" in the hearts of people, as are narrated by the rescued and captured young boys? Is this real spirit behind the "Nizame Mustafa" and is it a 'holy war' on right lines? Besides, are not Mujahideen or

Jehadis or Terrorists chips of the same block – not freedom fighters but paid bloodhounds, "mercenaries" who have come to 'corrupt the land,' falsify the purpose of Paradise on Earth? This 'azadi-trap,' in which the people of Kashmir are bleeding, is not an indigenous movement but a "trans-border Islamic terrorism," spearheaded by an amalgam of terrorists outfit drawing their recruits from many Pan-Islamic countries. How can these mercenaries (foreign militants) be called the soldiers of Allah benefiting Islam when the Quran underlines the seriousness of killing as crime: "whoever killed a human being, except as a punishment for murder or for sedition in the land, should be looked up as though he had killed all mankind. And whoever saved a human life should be regarded as though he had saved all mankind" (5:32).

This 'Azadi-trap,' in which the ample spirit of the Valley twists and strains and bleeds, is a satanic "mischief" to destroy crops and progeny (of man) in the land; and "Allah loves not mischief." To "equate Jihad with guerilla warfare," to quote and Dr. Farida Khanam "putting innocent persons to death is a criminal breach of the system of this world as devised by God." The Jihadis with extremist ideologies attract poverty-stricken youth to militancy with money and power of gun to fulfil their religious obligation by fighting against Hindus or Kafirs. According to "Canadian Muslims Civil Liberties Association," "Islam respects the sacredness of life, and rejects any express statement or tacit insinuation that Muslims should harm innocent people... using the concept of Jihad to justify harming the innocent is contrary to the letter and spirit of Islam." The sensible Muslim leaders around the world denounce the "terrorist attacks as flagrant violations of Islamic law."²² The pro-Pakistan militant groups—"a flagrant violations of Islamic law"—with their money-power and organizational skill cannot mislead people long; for a lie has no legs to stand upon. When we witness the condition of people in Pakistan and how far Islam and Muslims are safe and free there; the Muslims of Kashmir despise merging in Pakistan. On the other hand, the demand of pro-independence lobby is a cry in wilderness. This thirst to something afar causes us to live in a sphere of sorrow and turn the paradise into a vale of tears. This 'azadi' clashes with the freedom of Kashmiri Pandits, Dogra Hindu; the Buddhists of Ladakh who are "committed Indians." They condemn and oppose the unsecularization of Kashmir. This 'azadi' cry of pro-independence lobby is again a 'desire of a moth for star,' as Pakistan is

never going to release its administrative control of the strategic regions of Gilgit and Baltistan, or abandon its defector rule over Azad Kashmir.

The safety of Islam in India depends upon the Muslims themselves and in their common sense to see how far their 'Jihad' works against those inner and outer forces raising their head to destroy the prevailing harmony. The Muslims therefore are on the trail and they need to come out of the Azadi-trap of the Satan into the sun-lit fields of God's freedom. Only thus they can diffuse the light of peace and fragrance of brotherhood, to prove that Islam in essence is not a religion of sword and extreme intolerance. For, the Quran warns us "not to corrupt the land after it has been set in order" (7:85). The Islamic scholars, too, attest that 'Jihad' literally means "to struggle" against evil, destroy the corrupt, kill arrogance, burn vanity, lust, greed the enemies of mankind that have made humanity captive in the prisons of Inconscience, Ignorance and Falsehood. Therefore, Jihad pertains first and foremost to mastering one's passions, leading a virtuous life. Otherwise, the Satan will find some mischief still and,

"Impose his dreadful yoga on mankind,
And make the violent heart, the iron hand,
Sovereign of all."²³

According to Professor S.A. Abbasi, the Koran is an open book that can regulate human life with a strong sense of humanity and concern for others. "Islamic practices demand day-to-day regulation of life and frequent reiteration that only God is almighty and divine, that all humans are created equal that no one has hierarchical superiority over any other human being in the eyes of God."²⁴ In the words of the Quran: "There is neither East nor West for God." All creation is a harmonious whole of His creative delight, in which, as the Quran states; every nation has been given divine guidance and "Thou (O Muhammad) art but one who warneth, and for every nation there is a (divine) guide (sura, 13-5-37)." Again, (sura, 16-5-37): "unto every people did we send a messenger to teach them to worship God." At the root of all religions is God, who is neither Hindu nor Christian, neither Jew nor Muslim and each is related to other through God and God in all. Therefore, "O ye mankind! Be mindful of your Lord who hath created you, out of man created He, His

mate and from the twain hath spread abroad so many men and women! And so, be mindful of God in whose name you seek another relation with one another, and respect this Relationship (sura iv The Nisa part 8)."

Respecting this 'relationship' of one God and one Humanity ought to be the foundation of 'Jihad' – a struggle against individual and communal ego; in order to love God in the inhabitants of this vast tract of land right from the Himalayan mountains to the southern most tip of the subcontinent. The watchword of all true Indians is to quote Walt Whitman: "I am large enough to contain all these contradictions." This is harmony of contraries, an experience of spiritual secularism best described by a Persian saying: "Mantu Shudi man shudi," i.e. I become you and you become me. Such is the glory of Islam in the real sense and we desire for the awakening of true Islam in India. This is not as task light and easy, but a 'Jihad Akbar' against the forces of Darkness.

Ours is a 'Jehade Akbar' to be fought against the combined menacing forces of terrorism, fanaticism, casteism, corruption, injustice and selfishness. The first 'Jihad' is to fight against one's instincts, desires, communal ego, greed, lust and anger for the victory over the local-self is rendered probable through Ihasan (moral behaviour), Iman and Long persistent Ibadat. Then the strength of knowledge, 'Ilm' transforms into the conqueror's sword, ready to vanquish the forces of Darkness so as to bring about the advent of true Islam, when the tides of luminous peace are enjoyed and felt in the Garden of God by the God-intoxicated men, "Darwesh-e-Khuda Mast" like fragrance of vernal woods wafting in the global atmosphere. For the attainment of God-intoxicated state: we have first to be human, strive to become "Momins." Is not a "momin" a true devotee of God completely surrendered to Him who is the "Rabbul Almin," the Lord of the worlds? The "momin" abides by the word perceiving His hand in everything is resigned to His will in all circumstances. Those who are not Muslims are called "Zimmi" in Islam i.e., whose responsibility is that of God to deal with them, as He likes. If you are "momins," you know, it is 'Kufra' to torture them and it is greater 'Kufra' to obey the Pak-trainers (not the Book) to "kill Kashmiri Hindus, burn their residential houses and strike terror by resorting to indiscriminate firings." Are not those people 'Kafirs' who allow unfortunate boys and girls to be lured away by the Pakistani agents and

"Mujahideens to become the victims of their unnatural desires?" Did not Prophet Mohammed, in the sixth year of Hijri issued a directive that all those who betray any carelessness in protecting the Christians or the non-Muslims would be severely punished? Had he not ordered that the Muslims should ensure safety and security of the churches and other places of worship of the non-Muslims? The word of the Prophet clearly pinpoints that Islam does not allow its adherents to be prejudiced under blind faith or hate or tyrannise non-Muslims to commit 'Kufra' and become 'Kafirs' by perverting the Word to suit their inordinate desires.

The "Kufra" and "Kafir," the special words of Islam, have been wrongly interpreted, twisted to inject hatred, alienation, prejudice and virulence into the hearts of innocent Muslim majority given to understand that 'Kafir' means one who is not Muslim or a heretic. The 'Jihad' culture of Pakistan has conditioned terrorists that their destiny is to fight and liberate the "land of Allah from infidels whoever they might be."²⁵ History shows that this twisted, biased interpretation of the word 'Kafir' has given rise to brutal tyranny, intolerance and ruthless oppression. Did not this dangerously wrong interpretation, force tears of blood to recall the heart-rending, ghastly spectacle of the young sons of Guru Govind Singh, hardly eight and ten years of age—being buried alive in the brick walls? Why was it done? Because, they were labeled 'Kafir' as they refused to accept Islam (not through love) through sword. Is not the way to propagate Islam through terrorism against the 'Farman' of the Prophet, not only non-Muslims, even his own son-in-law, Hazrat Ali and his (prophets) grandsons were not exempted from being mercilessly and unjustly massacred. What a tragic irony of fate! This despotism of the vested interests under the abominable intoxication of false pride and prestige is the great 'Kufra' of the 'Kafirs,' and also the present "armed Islamic movement" of highly professional and tightly clad core persons of Pakistan. Their 'Kufir' invites God's wrath as they have brutally murdered the top brass and cream of Kashmiri community such as poets, writers, teachers, leaders, lawyers and judges.

This is how the Word can kill; sow the seeds of hatred for the posterity to harvest. The right and judicious interpretation and use of the word saves and enlightens. The right and actual meaning of the word "Kafir" means to "hide" or cover Truth or Reality with falsehood of egoism. A

person—whether Muslim or non-Muslim—hiding the Truth behind the veil of his "Khudi" or ego is called "Kafir." Selfishness being the cause of "Khudi" or ego veils the light of Truth revealed in Beauty demanding our love and reverence. "Khudi," in the form of individual and communal ego, makes one deviate from the reality to become unconcerned to the pangs of others, as if He never existed for him. By denying God or Reality a man commits "Kufra;" so deserves to be called "Kafir." In this broader universal sense—not in a narrower sense of being non-Muslims—the Kashmiri Pandits are "Kafirs," as they covered the Divine and divinity in man with their kitchen religion, the clashing individual egos that could not unite but disintegrate and segregate. Failing to rekindle the ancient flame of 'Dharma' that saves and following 'adharma' means catastrophe. Their lip service to religion had long since 'concealed' the spiritual light in man as people started living not for the whole but for petty individual self-satisfactions. Steeped in egocentric life of selfishness is committing 'Kufra.' And people leading self-conceited, egocentric life are Kafirs who attract the forces of disintegration that make communities extinct from their birthplace. A pandit, veiling or hiding the nature of his being in the prisons of "me" and "mine," full of ill-will and jealousy towards other pandit is his 'Kufra' for nothing pleased a Kashmiri pandit than the discomfiture of a fellow Kashmiri pandit. The 'Kufra' has thrown them in a worst crisis in which the clash of inflated egos shall not allow the community to unite and produce a leader of substance and quality. Is not their snobbery and cynicism the outcome of 'Khudi' that ruined them? The outside factors, which dragged them out of the Kashab-bhumi, were only catalytic agents; actually they possessed long before the exodus the inherent seeds of their self-destruction. It is the instinct of survival—not any spiritual sadhana or cultural ideal—that makes them live individually a selfish life of getting and spending; adopting all modern corrupt practices to gain their material ends. It is their 'Kufra,' the collective evil 'Karma' that has reduced them to beggary, roaming on the roads, vanishing in fast moving cities dreaming of the paradise lost.

Thus, we find that Hindus are not 'Kafir' in being non-Muslims; even a Muslim can commit 'Kufra' and be 'Kafir' by denying the God who has created humanity. Naturally, 'Jihad' does not mean to torture and kill non-Muslims; but to fight in the way of God, as the warrior of the Light rooted in divine consciousness, like Arjuna fighting to destroy

unrighteousness, pledged to protect the innocent and save the Earth from invading darkness. The ground rule of the Quaran (sura 2:190) for the warrior is: "Fight in the way of God against those who fight against you, but do not exaggerate"²⁶ by targeting the non-combatants, spreading terrorism, killing the innocent civilians. Abdul-Moti-Bayoumi of the Islamic Research Centre at Cairo's al-Azhar University says, "A Muslim should fight only the one who fights him, and children, women and the elderly people should be spared." Islamic scholars even refer to an ancient tradition that says Mohammed, when informed that some Muslims engaged in a 'Jihad' had killed women, raised his hands and prayed, "O God, be my witness that my hands are innocent of this crime." Therefore all-unrighteous, vice, sensuality is a violation of Islamic law leading to hell by ruining the earthly life. In the Alkoran, there is a passage which runs like this: "Give ye yourself up to unrighteousness, vice, devote your lives in drinking and sensuality and you are working your own ruin, you will then work your own ruin." Even killing oneself in a suicide squad is a great sin of wasting God's life in killing others rather than using it in elevating oneself and saving others. The Quran and Islamic tradition has it: "And do not throw yourselves into destruction with your own hands (sura 2:195)." The prophet Mohammed warned of dire consequences: "whoever kills himself with a knife will be in hell forever stabbing himself on the stomach. Whoever drinks poison and kills himself will drink it eternally in the hellfire." Ah! What about those who blast themselves with bombs? To quote Sheik Abdul Azizal-Sheik, the grand mufti of Saudi Arabia, the suicide bombings "are illegitimate and have nothing to do with Jihad in the cause of God. I am afraid it is another form of killing oneself," like Iago's motiveless revenge to destroy Othello and Desdemona—the symbolic of simplicity, love, beauty, joy and peace in creation.

The 'Jehade Akbar,' for the Indians would be to bridge this gaping cleft of partition by liberating the oppressed Muslims of POK. It is to save India from the anarchy of communalism, bloodshed and war. If we can set our house in right order, we can prevail upon our Neighbour to be Islamic, i.e. peace loving, propagating the Quran through love and logic, patience and persuasion and above all by the force of purity and light of character. This is 'Jihade Akbar' of the Muslims and non-Muslims breathing in the

spiritual democracy of India who live in freedom without the fear and pressure to follow any particular creed. Democracy of Mother India is an epitome of humanity in a state of evolution. The different people in the states don't live in an imposed monarchical, ecclesiastical, aristocratic order; but self-imposed discipline of secular, democratic, socialistic way of life widening and growing in oneness of a single family. It is only in Mother India, all Muslims live without oppression, enjoy equal rights; for oppression means denial of rights, and equal opportunities and freedom to preach and practice one's religion. In India it is religious freedom, while in Pakistan it is religious monopoly, enforcing religion with an intolerant sword. Muslims in India, enjoy freedom (in excess) to build mosques, raise Idgahas, burial grounds, form religious associations etc., which Hindus cannot do in Pakistan or in any Muslim country. Does any one of us frown upon the secretarial employees in the winter capital of the state for wearing convenient-for-nimaz-khandress on Fridays? Our constitution guarantees freedom of every individual to attend to a call of his/her religion as he/she deems fit. It is only in India that secessionist misusing freedom as sick children are tolerated, and normal law applies to all citizens irrespective of religion and community.

In comparison to Christians, Shias, Mojahirs, people in POK, the Muslims in India are far better, far well off, occupying prestigious positions in states and centre. It has been made probable only in the Indian Nationalism. There is no discrimination against the community, is borne out by the fact that we have two Muslims Presidents, and now Dr. Abul Kalam leading the country is honoured with Bharat Ratna—a very prestigious award. Besides, many Governors, two Chief Justices of the Supreme Court, many Supreme and High Court Judges, two Chief Ministers of predominately Hindu states, also many Cabinet Ministers in the States and Central Governments not to speak of Generals in the armed forces. Can this be possible for Hindus in the Islamic countries? What is the position of Christians and Hindus (if at all they exist) in Pakistan? Who is at the helm of J&K affairs and rules the roost and enjoys the most—the Muslims or non-Muslims? Therefore, Mr. Mustafa Kamal Sherwani clears the mist by chastising "the perpetrators of the prevailing injustice against the Muslim community."

Nonetheless, the truism is that no Muslim in J&K is being suppressed, discriminated and neglected like minority non-Muslims driven out of their homes to vanish in the sea of indifferent crowd of the mechanical world. Does not it show the negative use of the right of freedom by the majority in state whose representative members receive crores from the centre? Where that unaccountable money goes? According to Mr. Jagmohan, over one lac crore has been estimated to spend on the "development" of Kashmir. They have made it a parasite State, which cannot collect revenue enough to pay even the salaries of its staff. Who has siphoned off this money over the decades? Is it too little Azadi or "autonomy" which has constrained the local leaders from spending these funds for the benefit of the people of state? Does it not reveal that the weak-kneed central leadership has allowed them too much freedom to do as they please and swindle the people?

The question is: when the Muslims enjoy complete religious and political freedom, why then these tumultuous cries "we want freedom" tear the heart of the paradise, turn it into a bloody battlefield with countless graves gaping with untold miseries? Dear brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of 'sati-sar'²⁷ or the Lake of Virtue, freedom from what and freedom from whom? Don't you get more than the minorities with you; spend lavishly the major grant of the country? What has made you bound? Is not it your belief, your attitude toward human life and existence that has caught you in a tangle? Otherwise, where is the Shylock, in whose clutches you twist and turn? Don't you need to be rescued and liberated from the clutches of the "terrorists in the garb of Jihad" who hit more civilians whom they pretend to protect and liberate than the security personal? First thing is whose freedom you seek, as you are not oppressed or discriminated like Mojahris and people in POK? The term freedom emanates from the freedom struggle the 'Jihad,' that was fought—irrespective of party or community—by those who sacrificed their lives for a noble cause. Again, the question crops up: when the people of Kashmir are totally free, how come they select "freedom fighters?" Does fighting for freedom mean wielding gun against the secular state and peace loving people at the behest of Pakistan? If such is the definition of a freedom fighter then every terrorist in the world certainly earns such nomenclature.

Definitely, all our endeavours should have only one sense of direction—to attain freedom; for as Tilak had it: "Freedom is our birth right." But, we must decide what kind of freedom it shall be, and from what that freedom should redeem us. Merging in Pak means to suffer, be oppressed and discriminated like Mojahirs, Pok people, Shias and Sindhis; while separation is an isolation, a retreat into backwardness, a death blow to Kashmiryat, a disloyalty towards country's culture and constitution, a menace to the life and prosperity of your brothers and sisters in other states, a bad omen to repeat the old communal war and bloodshed with modern weapons. In both ways, it is to be out of the frying pan only to fall in the fire of hate and separation. We must decide whether the freedom we want is freedom from an oppressive political system of the state and ignorant and domineering clergy or, it is freedom from the laws of society and religion. Another point for consideration is: whether freedom means the misuse of freedom to suit a communal ideology or to satisfy the vagaries of the ambitious politicians or cater to the whims-whams of the ignorant and sensual priest? We must first ascertain what standards indicate freedom, by what yardstick do we measure the acts of 'freedom fighters' and to what extent this concept of freedom, and fighting for freedom with guns differs from anarchy, dictatorship or simply lack of freedom. Does it mean we should use freedom to destroy our happiness or our planet? For this freedom has cost our peace, prosperity, the lives of the people are sunk in grief and poverty, their hearts are barren like riot-hit streets of strife torn cities and towns. The Quran say, "whomsoever He Willeth, Allah sendeth astray, and whomsoever, He Willeth, He setteth on a straight path." Is not this freedom a deviation from the "straight path," a temptation of the Satan leading us "astray" into the blind alleys of infernal regions of pain and suffering.

The word "Azadi" tolls my mind back to the ideal of 'liberty' advocated by the poet Iqbal. For the poet, true liberty is an endeavour of man to free oneself from the shackles of Ego, greed, lust to become a perfect man; "Mard-e-hur" who has mastered the world and is free from the bondage to matter. That is real 'Azadi' dear Muslim brothers and not which engenders fear, worry, depression, disease, tension, suffering and destruction. In his presidential address to All India Muslim League at Allahabad (1930) Iqbal categorically maintained: "We have a duty towards India where we are destined to live and die."²⁸ Contrary to the

"duty," you dragged and destroyed non-Muslim in Kashmir like Talibans destroying the statue of Buddha, the grand artistic pieces wafting the fragrance of peace to the world? Now, where is Taliban state? And by destroying Kashmiryat, can you be happy, peaceful and free from fear and insecurity? In the words of the renowned Muslim Scholar Asghar Ali Engineer, "God upholds a just state even if it is unbelieving but does not uphold an unjust state even if it is Muslim." According to a Couplet: "The heart is coming out in the form of tears of blood. Fie upon such a freedom which is nothing but the very cause of one's ruination."

Iqbal does not believe that man is absolutely free to go against the laws of Nature acting in an isolated independence. In his "Assar-e-Khudi," he thinks the perfect man (freed from limitations), will be the highest product of evolution. Iqbal invokes the birth of the perfect man for doing God's works on Earth:

"Appear, O rider of Destiny,
Appear, O Light of the dark realm of change,
Illumine the scene of existence."

— *Assar-e-Khudi*.

Who knows that the 'rider of Destiny' may be growing among us, and while wise men talk and sleep, the Light shall appear:

"Arise and tune the harp of brotherhood,
Give us back the cup of the wine of love,
Bring once more days of peace to the world,
Give a message of peace to them that seek battle."

— *Assar-e-Khudi*.

The real freedom or azadi is emancipation from the heavy chains of 'Khudi,' the communal ego, thought of discrimination, feeling of dualism to become "Mard-e-Kamil." The hand of "Mard-e-Kamil" is dominant creator and solver of the problems. Love inspires him, as he is the pious hearted servant of God. These corrupt political systems of money-bag-elections, mechanical social organizations tied to the inhuman commercial and industrial systems, are in a state of flux. The fast flying wings of Time shall make these gay systems fade away and disappear. To recall Tennyson:

"Our little systems have their day,
Have their day and pass away,
All are broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O lord, art more than they."

To be free means, exercise of the right of freedom in a manner that is not an outrage on the religious or moral sentiments of others. It is the life of coexistence of the Muslims-non-Muslims in the relationship and love without any rivalry or hatred. A devout Muslim like Abdul Kalam Azad must be an apostle of national unity, as the success of our Nationalism depends largely on the slumbering mass of Islam. It is bondage of ignorance and servitude to classify everything into a uniform religious creed, neglecting the different aptitudes of beings like different flowers, trees and plants growing in Nature as an expression of same Energy. In the words of Farid-Ud Din Attar: "the Being whom I declare is no isolated existence. The whole world's his Being." Freedom lies in treating others, as you want them to treat you, because you cannot injure others without injuring yourself. So the holy Book enjoins us to "aid each other in practicing that which is good, but aid not each other in evil and injustice," and "the most perfect man is the one whose is most useful to others." True religious life is an expression of love (Ishik Allah) aiming at the unity of the mankind. Muhammad affirms the unity of God and brotherhood of man. This affirmation is the apex of freedom, which cannot be separated from Equality like sun and its rays. It is brotherhood that perfects the two godheads (equality and liberty), and makes them living and palpable.

Freedom is the divine orientation of human life in service of humanity, a "straight path" for shaping the world and myself. Therefore, our 'jihad' is against egoism, selfishness, unjust structures that perpetuate discrimination and inequalities, the bondages and shackles that imprison humanity. We value freedom as a necessary condition for the pursuit of greater values. And the pursuit of higher values itself is the result of freedom from darkness, obscurity, error, suffering and death. That is the reason; your type of 'Azadi' is a failure of human understanding because to pair it with equality is impossible, and too hard. It has made brotherhood a far off dream. Even our attempt to replace it by political and industrial association has thrown us in an unresolvable crisis. As yet, "liberty, equality, fraternity are only words loudly proclaimed but never yet put into practice, and they cannot be put into

practice so long as men remain what they are ruled by their ego and its desires."²⁹

Freedom does not lie in the assertion of egoistic rights, but in the prosperity and unity of all communities freed from sickness, squalor, illiteracy, poverty, hunger and want. The egoistic communal ambition of so-called self-determination is the cover for all types of desires, hungers and covetousness, feeding on pride and false esteem of religion in danger. Religion, which is Love, truth and worship of the Beautiful can never be in danger, but eclipsed for a while by human stupidity and ignorance. Freedom is a great responsibility to walk on a "straight path," to love God in all, be loved by sharing that love; for freedom is a precious gift, a gift from the creator and other men. "Free action," according to Sri Aurobindo, "is the action of the Divine in us and through us, no other action can be free."³⁰ Really, freedom is man's capability, his ability to be true to oneself—the Divine in all and working through all. Our actions determine the course of destiny. The way we use freedom determines whether we want to live in hell of suffering and destruction, or enjoy divine freedom thriving in peace and prosperity. In words of the Poet-Seer:

"We build our future thought by thought,

Good or evil and know it not.

Thought is another name for fate.

Choose then thy destiny and wait."

You were free to "make a mischief" in Kashmir after Independence, when the Paradise was "set in" a democratic "order" to make the valley breathe peace and joy of togetherness and swing in a rhythm of universal harmony in patterning Nationalism for the emergence of global sense in man. Heedless of the warning you paid lip service to the Word that warns: "Do not make mischief on the earth after it has been set in order"(7:56). The Law is: Try to throw dust into the eyes of God; you will be blinded yourself. The mischief-mongers, miscreants, killers incur God's wrath, and sooner or later are taken to task. Satan in man finds 'mischief' for those out of tune with the Word; in whose heart right impulses do not well up, and who take up wrong methods to achieve right ends. By misusing freedom man is a menace to humanity, inviting

God's wrath for himself but using freedom he can become a benefactor of humanity. God is the "Rab-ul-aalemeen" or Lord of the universe. He created both Hindu and Muslim; so will not adversely judge one who is not formally one of the Faiths. He will judge him by his deeds. To argue otherwise means that another God created Hindus, a thought illogical that cannot be countenanced. "All you have issued the one from the other," the words of the Quran re-echo in Saadi exhorting cry of the heart at the spectacle of life: "Listen to Nature: she cries out to us that we are all members of one family," *vasudeva kutumbkam*. Being waylaid by cruder doctrines, dogmas and opinions, the minds and hearts become narrow and bitter. The narrow minds and bitter hearts are inherently incompatible with the core concept of freedom. "Freedom is a matter of mind and heart," said Sarvapli Radhakrishnan in an Independence Day broadcast to the nation, as the President of India adding, "if the mind is narrow and heart bitter, there is no freedom whatever else we may have."

A question often crops up for the intellect: why is it that such figures like Gandhi, Tagore, Tilak, Swami Vivekanada, Sri Aurobindo, etc. don't arise among Indian Muslims to put old wine of the Word into the new bottles? The reason why Indian Muslims lag behind in solving the difficult and puzzling problem of Hindu-Muslim unity and pave way to a new world order of global brotherhood? In that state of universal brotherhood, "my Namaz," in the experience of Swami Rama Tirtha, "is the informal bow out of respect for Him. The aching of my heart for Him is my Koran."³¹ The Koran or the greatest Lesson (which is also the simplest) can be learnt and felt with —

"Brain and eye to see,

One God and one Humanity."

The Arabic root of Islam is "slim," which means peace and the Quran states "God calls to the home of peace (10:25)" inherent in Nature and soul of man. In the beginning of the Koran, there are three letters: Alif (A), Lam (L), and Mim (M). In Arabic, the letter Lam (L) becomes silent just before a consonant. For example, we write Karim-al-Din, but we read Karim uddin, because the letter 'L' being silent gives the sound 'U' or 'O.' Thus, ALM will read AUM in Arabic. The ALM or OM in Koran is the natural name of that Nameless God or Allah being worshipped by all.

It is the Absolute or Allah being worshipped by the Granth, the Bible, the Gita and the Vedas. Swami Vivekananda had the greatness to say, "The Mohammedan conquest of India came as a salvation to the downtrodden to the poor. That is why one-fifth of our population have become Mohammedans." Again, in a letter he wrote to a Muslim friend of his, "We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonizing the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran. Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of THE RELIGION, which is Oneness, so that each may choose that which suits him the best."

It is a fact that Religion is Oneness but who are those making it a religion of sword that tolerates nothing? Is its central theme proselytization or universalization? Can we call that religion authentic which generates pride and a sense of intolerance? How can we have respect for another religion when all the time our attempt is to obliterate it? Don't we separate ourselves from others by preaching that there is only one way of social and religious salvation? In our secular tradition, the faith in the Supreme is the basic principle. But, that does not mean the state can assume "divine prerogatives," and identify itself with or be controlled by any particular religion. Because, in the words of the Prophet Muhammad, "There is not a people but a warner has gone among them and every nation had a messenger" (Quran, XXXV.25). This is further illustrated beautifully by Farid Din-Al Attar (died in 1230), who said: "Each finds a way of his own... each one is enlightened according to his own place in the knowledge of truth." Therefore, William Blake sings:

"All must love the human form
In heathen, Turk or Jew;
Where Mercy, Love, and pity dwell,
There God is dwelling too."

The problem of Hindu-Muslim unity can be solved amicably, if we are ready to adhere to the Truth. The Truth one and eternal which we are in quest is that from which all other Truth derives and cannot be shut up in a "single trenchant formula." It is "not likely to be found," writes Sri Aurobindo, "in its entirety or in all its bearing in any single

philosophy or scripture or uttered altogether and for ever by any one teacher, thinker, prophet or Avatar."³² Again, "All religions have some truth in them but none has the whole truth; all are created in time and finally decline and perish. Mohammed himself never pretended that the Quran was the last message of God, and there would be no other. God and Truth outlast these religions and manifest themselves anew in whatever way or form the Divine Wisdom chooses."³³ As such, every scripture contains two elements: One temporary or perishable, belonging to the ideas of the period, and country in which it was produced. The other element is eternal and imperishable, applicable in all ages and countries, and is the source of lasting unity and harmony. The spirit of unity lies deeper down, beyond the temporal or perishable elements in the heart and soul. The causes of disunion lie in ourselves; so the remedies must be sought within through mutual knowledge, sympathy and understanding. The purely external means, effected by undignified political adjustments, congress flatteries, appeasement politics, and compromises have proved failure and destructive to unsecularise Kashmir dragging other parts of the state to the same way. Since Independence, the politicians approached Kashmir falsely by flattering the Muslims out of a selfish weakness and cowardice. This has not conciliated the Muslim brother and it will never as long as we consider the Hindu-Muslim unity as a political problem. "As a political question," Sri Aurobindo observes, "of the Hindu-Mohammedan problem does not interest us at all, as a national problem it is of supreme importance." Why? Because, in democratic set up of single and indivisible India, Hindus and Muslims have their common political, economical and cultural interests, as they are not two separate political units. Like poverty, overpopulation, the Hindu-Muslim unity is a national problem. The wedge that the Britishers created between the two, the subsequent political leaders with their adjustments and horse-trading have only intensified it. The cleft in consciousness can be bridged only through cleansing our hearts of prejudices, clearing our minds of the cobwebs of misunderstanding. The Hindus must spiritually awaken, and extend to the Muslim brother the love of the patriot, remembering what Sri Aurobindo means, that Mother India has given him too a permanent place in her bosom. Therefore, the embittered Hindu community should "not allow the passions of the moment to obscure their vision of the future."³⁴

The Time-Spirit calls Muslims to manifest and embody the glory of Islam by listening with the inner ears to the magic-music resounding in the five letters of the word I S L A M. The 'I' stands for the Infinite; the letter 'S' vibrates with living soul; the alphabet 'L' stimulates the inner heart with the Light of the Limitless hidden in the soul. For, "the spirit of man is the candle of God," says the Bible and "the body or Man is the temple of God," reveals the Veda. The realization of the living Light of the Infinite in the Soul is an Attainment suggested by the letter 'A.' The letter 'M' stands for Man in the whirl of Mutability. With the Attainment, he can become real man—Mard-e-Moumin or Mard-e-Kamil. Such a glory of Islam is only probable in India and nowhere else for here unlike the west; democracy is a growing spiritual Oneness. The "attainment" of perfection already in man is our goal and objective of collective life. The goal is shadowy and dim as we the "Children of the soil" don't feel our responsibility towards the Land that sustains us. It was due to Jinnah's propaganda, Hindus were forced to think of Muslims as being separate from themselves; the extremist among Hindu doubt the Muslims' loyalty to India by their maintaining distinct and separate identity, living aloof from the main cultural and political stream. Now, they have seen that this defunct two-nation theory of Jinnah has been utter failure with its repercussions to place the two communities in opposite warring camps, draggers drawn at each other. The Muslim mind, its leadership conditioned by Jinnah's hypnotism, need to be de-conditioned, dehypnotized from the illusion of separation, labouring under falsehood that they could not live with Hindus. Otherwise, this deceptive illusion shall release the volcano of hate triggering catastrophe. Moreover, this anachronism is dangerously detrimental for the community itself. The problem further complicates by witnessing the Muslims of India, more interested in the welfare of other Muslim states outside, than that of India itself. It is hard for them to feel truly an integral portion of Indian people. Consequently, such a hardened attitude has given rise to the pan-Islamic movement cutting at the root of Indian nationalism.

Here comes the role and responsibility and mission of the Muslim leadership and clergy in India. Although, some of the Muslim leaders (prior to partition) maintained that Hindus and Muslims form one nation; yet they did not favour "eclecticism." They did not undertake (after partition) the task of giving a new and correct direction to the thought of Indian Muslims. Due to selfishness of the Muslim leadership for

contriving political concessions from the centre, and due to the passivity of the like-minded public figures, the Muslims of the post-partition era continued to think along the lines laid down by Jinnah and Sir Syed. Unlike Islamic nations where a fundamental revival opposes any kind of reformist spirit; the duty of Muslim leadership and educated clergy in India is to start radical reform movements of comparative, liberal spirit to re-programme the mental computers of the Muslims that the basis of Islam is not a creed, but being and becoming 'Darwesh-e-Khuda-Mast,' to which creed or ritual helps in the beginning. As the end is realization that transcends all creeds, so the salvation can also be attained outside the "creed." The rigidity of limiting religion to a creed breeds fanaticism and hate. It shuts humanity in the 'sectarian universalism,' forcing the Muslims think, that those who prefer the creed, no matter of what nation, race or community belong to a universal Islamic society; while those who do not accept this creed cannot be part of this society. Leadership needs to comprehend the dangers of 'sectarian universalism' working against the spiritual secularism, which is the backbone of our Nationalism and a necessary step and a powerful means in the emergence of global sense in man, who like Socrates can proclaim: "I am a citizen of the world" and "my nation is the universe." Maulana Wahiduddin Khan says with stress that the Hindu brother "instead of allowing themselves to be fettered by Jinnah's ideas, should uphold the religion of their traditions, the most important aspect of which is to see unity in diversity."

The forward looking vision clearly visualizes that ISLAM is not like the stagnant waters of the Lake, infected with rotting weeds and insects sucking its vitality steadily, but a fresh and flowing Vittelsta and Sind, marching, growing and singing of the Infinite. This is what the five-lettered mystic word ISLAM suggests to the meditative eye of the aspirant:

- I: the Infinite, indivisible Truth upholding creation, also immanent as
- S: the Soul, the Conscious Being, at present as suggested by the letter 'L.'
- L: Latent or hidden in every form of creation—limitless in limitations but in essence.

- A: All pervading, deathless spark of Almighty Allah or the Absolute.
- M: Man in ignorance has to evolve, become 'momin' Mard-e-Kamil and Mard-e-Hur by breaking or transcending the Mundane walls of Material Consciousness so as to be in tune with the Infinite as Darwash-e-Khuda Mast.

We are badly in need of the few personalities in the Muslims of India, the men of character, 'momins,' capable of replacing 'Kudi' with soul-personality by transcending all exclusiveness so that the Islam undergoes a churning process of liberalization. According to Firoz Ahmed, "Islamic laws have never been static in nature. They are based on the requirements of time and society and can be moulded accordingly." Time demands that Mohammedans should bring revolution in their thinking, start new movements to change the stamp of the temperament of the adherents. For Islam or 'slim' is a balm of peace meant for the wounds of suffering humanity and not a religion of sword inflicting unhealed wounds on the body and mind of people. For, "the Quran teaches," says Mr. Ahmed, to "be progressive and interpret the Muslim personal law in tune with modern times." In his part of a speech made by the Pakistan's leader, Field Marshal Ayub Khan to Deobandi Ulama, in May 1959, he stated: "Islam was a dynamic and progressive movement, but with the passage of time, the Muslims at large sought to concentrate more on the dogmatic aspects of Islam. Those who looked forward to progress and advancement came to be regarded as disbelievers and those who looked backward were considered devout-Muslims. It is a great injustice to both life and religion to impose on twentieth century man the condition that he must go back several centuries in order to prove his bona fides as a true Muslim." Ayub Khan was not dubbed a kafir for saying this, because he said it out of concern for his community.

The spirit of tolerance of other religions is traditional to the Hindu ethos due to the realization: that "Truth is one and sages call it through different names." That is why, like Pak and Bangladesh we did not eliminate this problem. Herein lies the glory of this country. We continue to struggle with the complex and perplexing problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. The partition of the country in a reckless haste was not an act of Providence as much as the perversion of religion by the selfish ambition of a shrewd politician. Therefore, it cannot remain a permanent feature of our

existence. The source of conflict is not due to diversity of religions; but the lack of toleration—the indifference born of secret pride or contempt for others and it requires great courage and patience to cultivate sympathy and understanding of the knowledge coming from different directions. The Quran enjoins us to tread the path of patience: "Surely the patient will be paid their wages in full without measure" (39:10), because, the patient man "is the helper of God" (61:14). It is the will of God that Muslims live in their 'chosen' land India and being "the helper of God," means to keep the flame of the spiritual-secularism alive and radiant. How to keep the flame alive? By our devotion to own ideals and institutions with tolerance and respect for the ideals and institutions of other sections of the community, with whom we share the common civic life to help in building an ideal Nation of our dreams.

We want the conquest of Islam—not through intolerant sword that reaps hate and violence repeating the barbaric periods—but through wisdom, love that wins and light of Ibadat that captivates the hearts. The sword makes the killer to wade through the sea of blood before it kills the killer. Therefore, "put up again the sword in its place," warns Jesus, "for all who take the sword shall perish with the sword." It is the conquest through wisdom, large-heartedness, called Akbar-Deli. Akbar, the great once wanted to test the intelligence of his courtiers; he drew a line and said, "Shorten it." The courtiers tried to shorten it by cutting it from the sides or from the middle. But Akbar said, "No, no. It won't do. Shorten it without cutting it." When nobody could do so, he looked at Birbal. Birbal complied with his orders by drawing a bigger line parallel to Akbar's line and said, "Here you are sir. Your line has been shortened without being cut." Similarly, dear Muslims, without cutting non-Muslims in Kashmir; you could have proved yourself greater by light of Koranic wisdom with greater love and knowledge than they possessed. This is Akbar-dili i.e., great-heartedness.

The present lurid flames of fundamentalism fueled by the politicization of religion have spread like wild fire. Perhaps, it is a passing phase of tragic consequence. For, Pakistan has cunningly laid its "Azadi-trap" to allow innocent Muslim any breath of freedom with its frantic efforts to make entire India a field for its terrorist activities. Born under "the star of communal carnage," Pakistan cannot help to subdue its war-mongering tendency as it is destined to live with the "bloody birthmark of hatred

for all." The designs of politicians, passions of warlords are steadily converting Kashmir into a "flash point for the possible major conflict in the region" that shall end up by changing the entire political geography of the subcontinent. There is fairly strong element in Islam, which regards the intolerance of other religions as the mark of a true believer. This intolerance is a bone of contention. A narrow and ignorant fanatic refuses to believe in anything but the religion in which he was born. And "all fanaticism is false," says Sri Aurobindo, "because it is in contradiction of the very nature of God and of Truth." Already, the field in India has been made fertile for bigots, fanatics to sow the seeds of disharmony leading to the conflict ending in bloodshed and destruction of the precious innocent lives.

Kashmir has been unsecularised; the lava of years of injustice, discrimination, nepotism, corruption, disparity and youth unrest has turned Jammu (going 'Azadi' way) into a "shimmering" volcano ignited by the cross-border designs of Pakistan. Already, the Trikuta hills are in the grip of foreign sponsored insurgents. "The shimmering unrest in Jammu today," observes Dr. Jitender Singh in his "Tales of Travesty," is loaded with vengeance and fueled by the mute anger of the aggrieved and the wrong." The unsecularisation of Kashmir has not only eroded the democratic culture; but has also thwarted the process of assimilation of the Mohammedan culture into the main stream of Nationalism. A crude misunderstanding and wrong interpretation of the 4th, 5th, 6th, verses of the chapter Nine has forced the intolerant sword of Islam to justify violence in the name of religion to "kill those who join other gods with God wherever ye shall find them, and seize them, besiege them, and lay wait for them with every kind of ambush."³⁵ It is possible to live amicably with a religion whose principle is toleration. "But how is it possible" Sri Aurobindo argues, "to live peacefully with a religion whose principle is 'I will not tolerate you.' How are you going to have unity with these people." Could, docile and mild Kashmiri Hindus live in Kashmir in spite of their extreme patience and endurance?

Perhaps, this enmity and violence of the communities is of two brothers, who hate much more than others, because their "hate is the indication of the possibility of a much greater love," writes Sri Aurobindo. With all this hate, "the present must surely change, but whether by destruction or a new construction on the basis of a greater Truth is the issue." One

cannot observe long non-violence oneself without removing violence from other. After all, love compels love and strength conciliates the strong. Swami Vivekanada who had a prophetic vision when he declared: "I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedantic brain and Islamic body." The darkness of communalism, religious bigotry puts up a serious resistance but it cannot delay the sunrise, for Nature abhors vacuum and, the Love—masked in terror—appears to destroy all that is false, evil, and anti-divine. Often destruction of falsehood leads to a new creation as none can oppose or resist the evolutionary 'nisus.' The destiny of India is to find the solution to Hindu-Muslim problem for the advent of a new world order of global brotherhood. It is for Musulaman to choose whether he prefers the "firm clasp of the brother or the resolute grip of the wrestler,"³⁶ for "The colloquy at Kurukshetra will yet liberate humanity."³⁷ Therefore, it is better to nip the evil in the bud and heed what a Muslim poet says in Persian: "To keep other's heart pleased is a great virtue like the pilgrimage to Haj." Therefore, my Muslim brothers and sisters, my own self in form of country men, let us pay heed to the import of immortal words of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi and "let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works" as mankind is heading towards mutually assured destruction, and says Rumi:

"Wherever I go there are torches and candles,

Wherever I go there is tumult and shouting

For the world tonight is heavy and in travail,

Striving to give birth to the eternal world."

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24. S.A. Abbasi, 'Thoughts on Secularism of Islam,' Span, July/August, 2002, pp. 16-19.
25. Daily Excelsior, July 1, 1994, p. 4.
26. On Violence, the Koranic message is best summed up in these lines: "Fight in the way of God those who wage war on you, and do not commit aggression. God does not like aggressors." (Al-Baqurah; 2: 191). It is the fight in Self-defense that has been mentioned; the believers are "warned against committing aggression" says Prof. Abassi, "and moderation is ordered even in fights against aggressors;" And if you desire to punish the aggressors, then punish them only to the extent to which you have been wronged but if show patience, then surely that is the best. (Al-Hahll; 16:127). India was never an aggressor, wants brotherly relations with the neighbour and peace in the region so that the western powers and the Islamic world do not exploit. Add fuel to the fire and satisfy their political communal and commercial ambitions. But have Pakistan ever responded with sincerity to our loving arm and really want peace, when the Koran gives firm directions that treaties must be honoured (Al-Tauba; 9:4) war prisoners be treated with compassion (Al-Nur, 24:33) "And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also toward it. (Al-Anfal: 8:62).
27. It is the Puranic name of Kashmir—the land recovered from the Son of Darkness by the Tapas of Kashap Rishi, so is called Kashap Bhumi—Kashap means power of Love and Sacrifice. Bhumi or Valley is born of Love and Sacrifice is symbolically 'Satisar.' The Lake of Virtue, an ideal to be exemplified and materialized by the children of the Bhumi who ought to be the flowering of virtue or Sati i.e. the Harmony of Virtue.
28. "Shamloo: Speeches and Statements of Iqbal," p. 13 and pp. 34-35.
29. The Mother, On Thoughts And Aphorisms (cent. Ed. Vol. 10, 1984), p. 307.
30. Letters on Yoga, Part I, p. 130.
31. Vol. IV, p. 82.
32. Essays on the Gita, Vol.13, p. 2.
33. India's Rebirth, June 29, (1926), p. 184.
34. India's Rebirth, p. 233.
35. Interpreting the verses in proper context, remind us of the Bhagavad Gita (2:31, 2:32, 2:33 and 2:34), that do not underline the emphasis on war but on fair play,

moderation and chivalry that runs through all the Koranic passage on conflict: "O you who believe, you shall fight the disbelievers who challenge you—let them find you stern and know that God is with the righteous" (Al-Tauba: 9:123). In the words of Prof. S.A. Abbasi, "It is not any ideology contained in the scriptures at the root of violence and terrorism, it is the greed of man-who distorts the truth, misappropriates the knowledge and pollutes the spirit behind the ideologies to serve his own ends, often recasting the "word of God" as an excuse for his own misdeeds.

36. India Rebirth, p. 49.
37. Thought and Aphorisms, p. 63.

Chapter - VIII

NATIONALISM: AN EMERGENCE OF GLOBAL SENSE IN MAN

The present age of bewilderment poses a threat and a challenge to the children of the ancient Hind. Our Nationalism is at stake and we are caught in the whirlwind of world-situation, in which the sinister-circus of national rivalries are so appalling that even the sport has become an unfailing cause of ill-will. Our survival as a civilized nation is jeopardized. We are left like a rudderless ship tossing in a violent sea. The typical of our nationalistic age is as usual everyone behaves according to one's political predilections, fondness and strong liking of this or that 'ism.' These predilections give rise, to quote the words of George Orwell to "most savage combative instincts that: mimic warfare" even in things like games and small commercial transactions.

Nonetheless, the mighty and heart-stirring ideal of our Nationalism has power to meet the present challenge: for its embodiment means a way of life, that leads to the health and happiness of masses scattered throughout the world. For that to happen a general change in Indian consciousness is a prime requisite—change of heart that reinvigorates a new thinking substance to impel heart to realize the soul of Beauty, which is our country. What that beauty is? It is an ordered rhythm of Life expressing in proportion or variety. It is the simple instinct in Nature that works for sameness in difference, a manifestation of multimooded Unity through the rainbow colours of Humanity. In Beauty's order and proportion lies hidden the principle of harmony, in which all problems of existence; all forms, creeds, cults, sects, and religions are dissolved and dipped in the Light's liquid consciousness to be born anew as vernal flowers of forest glades garlanded in a golden thread that, lo!

"Nothing in the world is single,
All things by law divine,
In one another's mingle.

To make us—

"See the mountains kiss the high heaven,
The waves clasp each other,
No sister flower would be forgiven,
If it disdained its brother."

—Shelly – *Love Philosophy*

An emergence of a global sense in man is a challenge; an adventure of spiritual consciousness; a task light and easy if we acknowledge the beauty in man in Nature and in all forms of the changing cosmos. When we begin to perceive things in the spirit of truth; the distinction of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian melts into truth-consciousness. One finds his own Self in the forms of all, growing and glowing in beauty ringing with an everlasting note of Reality. This principle of diversified-Unity is the fountain source of Indian Nationalism. The theory of the Aryan-Dravidian division; a concocted figment of the Western Indologists¹ does not stand before the light of reality. India's unity is a continuity of a cultural stream that has never ceased to be. The soul of India – inspite of the physical partition – is always one and indivisible. The division – the result of our fruitless quarrels – is not destined to be for ever as the destiny and mission of India has something in the making that shall compel circumstance to jostle together in a clash to materialize the image of Mahabharata, the Greater India. Moreover, on the spirit of her Nationalism rests the emergence of a global sense in man an impetus to a new world order heralding the dawn of the universal brotherhood. As such, the unity of India is in the interest of mankind itself. We have to save India according to what she represents in the history of evolution. According to the Mother, "India must be saved for the good of the World," since "India alone can lead the world to peace and a new world order"² by becoming the "land of its resurrection—the resurrection to a higher and truer life."³

At the "evening-time" of the present Age of confusion, the "torch-lights" of the pioneers of the Renaissance in India burnt with a "new self-consciousness" to give birth to a new age. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word she lives, and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples." Sri Aurobindo "the prophet of Nationalism, the lover of humanity," aptly pointed out that independence the goal of the Indian political movement is not an end in itself, but a part of a higher world change. The united and free India has to arrive at full stature. Because, "India is the guru of the nations, the physician of the human soul in its profounder maladies; she is destined once more to new-mould the life of the world and restore the peace of human spirit." Naturally, India's concept of Nationalism is quite different from the European concept of a political arrangement of a sovereign state. The land of the Rishis is the spiritual force of a great civilization. It is this 'force' that creates a geographical location, within which a powerful central government works according to the principle of 'dharma,' and well-trained hero-warriors to protect the working of 'dharma.' With their spiritual force they fortify the legal enactments and the widening boundaries of the country.

The European concept of nation-state rooted entirely in material, vital, mental needs of man, is a transitory phase of human evolution; a stage when animal and egoistic man is undergoing a transformation. The ideal Nationalism is a widening circumference of Consciousness, stretching her arms with a yearning to enfold humanity and Nature in her rapturous embrace. Unlike pseudo-patriotism of the West that clefts creation into God and Caesar, resulting in the distortion of beauty of the universe which is the body of God enveloped into the mystery of Beauty as the secret of evolution, the Truth revealing variously in myriad forms of Nature. In the European arrangement of the Nation-state, the union that ensures is a kind of armed peace in which a lurking fear of disintegration always hangs on the earth like dark clouds of impending storm. The dreams of the powerful kings and conquerors like Caesars, Charlemagne, Napoleon and others, that for the moment constructed a military dominant state on the shaky political and geographical unity, and not a Nation in the real sense. The imperialistic ambitious outlook of sole supremacy of the military dominant state is a great question mark on the destiny of mankind. It virtually blocks earth's evolution towards

world union and works against the nature of the soul. It also contradicts the "holy plan" of Nature, and suffocates mankind in crowded polluted atmosphere that one can't enjoy the air one breathes.

The political and military power in itself can't make an empire last for ever. The Macavellian crooked means, and futile attempts of military power to aim at a political unity are "impossibility." The titanic egoism of extreme selfishness trying in vain to encircle the earth in a geographical isolation is a deception of sense-mind of the vitalistic person caught in an 'illusion' that hardly stands the light of reality like a glittering mirage in a desert. Those who place political, material and military claims above the growing needs of human aspiration; either undergo a radical change or pass into airy nothing, leaving some shreds of memory in the stands of time. Where is the mighty structure of Rome, the Caesors raised in the loom of time? When the Caliphs ruled Baghdad, it was the home of millionaires - the so-called New York of the medieval world. Alas! The time, when Mongols invaded Baghdad, it could hardly retain the trace of its magnificence. This world of changing shows reminds us of Shelley's "Ozamndias of Egypt;"

"Nothing beside remains round the decay,
Of that colossal wreck boundless and bare."

Change, the law of Nature has thrown us in a state of flux. The world ebbs and flows in the inescapable Cycles of birth, growth, maturity, decline and disintegration that dog individuals and nations equally. In the cycles of creation, each individual and nation being a part of the whirling cosmos, passes through the well-marked stages of birth, growth, decay, and sometimes a miraculous resurrection. It is the resurrection of the Culture, a growing consciousness of the soul of the individual and the Nation other than the fleeting mental, vital and physical carvings and desires. The soul in the individual, and the Nation with its spiritualized-cultural evolution continues to evolve in the psychic expansion of its being and becoming, opening and expanding in million forms of creation. So have Rome and Greece incarnated (not in the physical or material terms), but as the psychic evolution of the soul of Rome and Greece, the "mind of light" and the "cast of social character" which have become a part of the treasure-house of humanity marching towards an emergence of the universal sense in man.

The impossibility of political union and a Geographical isolation of a military dominated state can't give birth to an ideal Nation. This is one-sided attempt of the ambitious politicians and rulers repeating an unstable stability in the whirl of change. Look at the collective existence of European countries. Is there anything – other than the utilitarian interests – enduring to create an infallible unity transcending the prison-walls of political suzerainty and geographical isolation, aiming at the fulfilment and perfection of mental, vital and physical nature of man? The makeshift unity of the Europe belongs separately to each of the European country. They live and breathe as isolated units and groups. They are joined together, combined pragmatically as rings in a chain of selfishness that have motives utilitarian in nature, the pooling of the resources against each other. Instead of unity, it embodies the vital, intellectual and cultural aggressiveness of powerful and progressive nations, expressing:

- Domination,
- Expansion,
- The Land hunger,
- Commodity hunger,
- Cultural perversion, etc.

Such trends of national-egoism divide and rule humanity with its grating and choking statecraft of pseudo-religio-political patriotism. These ideologies of nation-units born out of the ignorance of Nature imprison the ample spirit of humanity in a rock of inconscience like a long sleeping volcano, waiting for a phoenix-birth out of the ashes of the past. For the three godheads of Democracy, Freedom-Brotherhood-Equality can't be choked and hushed into silence forever. Political power, military lordship are not unity in themselves, just as order and safety are not civilization but aids to civilization as much as machines are means to happiness and not happiness in themselves.

In India too, attempts were made by the Mauryan, the Gupta and the Mughal rulers to keep the country united with their successful organization, administrative skill and political diplomacy. But, their political and administrative power didn't prove a sure insurgence against

"disintegration." Because, in the working of Nature, political status, a strong well-organized government, the external borders, economic prosperity, commerce, laws and administration are not end in themselves, but conditions for the growth of higher and diviner purpose in human life and existence. These can't guarantee that a nation will keep its unity. For Rome had these elements to the maximum; the Caliphs had them when they ruled from Baghdad, and the modern colonial empires have been fortified by a powerful central government and well-trained army. As they lived to serve their own material interests only desiring expansion and power by curbing and crushing the freedom of poor people, they could not help their disintegration.

The political history of India – after the end of the war of Mahabharata and the withdrawal of Sri Krishna from the earth scene – is a continuous fall and degradation. It is the story of pit-falls of empires and kingdoms, rising only to fall, leaving the country in chaos of petty states, a very image of disintegration. The floodgates of invasion were opened the day the Indian frontier kingdoms fell to the Persian hordes. The waves of hostile armies swept in India beginning with Alexander, continuing with Sakas and Hunas, the Pathans and Moguls and ending with the British. And after centuries rich and opulent living, India entered into a dark period of Inertia, waiting to be awakened by the pioneers of Indian renaissance from her long slumber to be infused with a new breath of her growing ideal of Nationalism. The influence of Warren Hastings, Maculays and missionaries that the British brought with them soon wore away; the sleeper that was India awoke from the Tamas of centuries. A clarion call of the pioneers and architects of Indian Renaissance went forth reverberating, echoing and re-echoing the cry of nationalism. Nationalism, the birth of India as a Nation, a vision of the prophet-seer, and not the creation of a "political hackster"⁴ as Nolini Kant puts it, has envisaged an exceptional future for the Indian nation that shall eclipse the glimmering dawns of the past. The men of deeper vision are going to lift nationalism to a new pinnacle, justifying the separate existence, separate effort of a whole people in fundamental unity with entire humanity.

Nationalism, a force to be reckoned with, is a way of life, a system of values that ensures an organic growth of society by perfecting human

aspirations with a spiritual power called 'Bharat Shakti or 'Brahma-Shakti.' Therefore, the history of India never gave birth to any Hitler or Mussolini. Here no Changez Khan rose in power converting a nation into a military state to uphold the creed of this or death only to magnify his personality under the mask of national ego. The Indian Nationalism is not statecraft of the few for appeasing their vitalistic hunger, aggressively satisfying some mental ideas of material opulence. Of course, material interests, greatness, power and prosperity are implied in the natural growth of Nationalism. India is a country that has always lived for God, and the world as a "helper and leader of the whole human race." This is her 'dharma,' the order of the rhythm and proportion in the interaction with forms held tighter in a relationship. 'Dharma' is a principle "by which" as Sri Aurobindo puts it, "the action of the universe, the action of its parts, the action of the individual is held together... and the definition of dharma or Law is action as decided by the nature of the thing in which action takes place: 'Svabhava-niyatam karma.'"⁵

It is in and through 'dharma' a deeper spiritual experience comes that excludes nothing; as it is meant to elevate everything to the level of higher consciousness, in which contraries meet; the sameness is felt in difference and variety sings of the unity. In the working of 'dharma,' politics, economics, commerce, technology and occult knowledge are means to an end, and not an end in itself. "Here in India," as Nolini Kant observes, "the king, the administrator and economic factor were superficial limbs of society, they lay at the periphery of the people's consciousness."⁶ The Vedic conception of a Ruler as Leader, unlike European despotic king, is a divinised human being. Prof. A.V. Sastri in his "The Psychology of Indian Nationalism," significantly pointed out that in India, "The social hierarchy was not at some time a political hierarchy," because, "a greater sovereign than the King was 'Dharma,' the sheet-anchor of the religious, social and political work. The king was not an owner of kingdom, but a divine trustee as had gained mastery over his passions and desires to be the 'Self-ruler,' the 'Samrat' and the enjoyer of the kingdom, "rajyam samrddham." In the words of Sri Aurobindo, it is "sweet and happy domination of which it may be said in the pregnant phrase of the Greek thinker: The kingdom of the Child."⁷

It is the principle in the making of Mahabharata, the noble country epitomizing Indian Nationalism, the spiritual impulse of being and

becoming of Consciousness-Force the two-in-one in an endless song of many meeting lives, like the family of Shiva in the embrace of the extremes of Nature. It is "Solar harmony" of His cosmic Body that makes stars and planets to exist in the freedom individually and collectively like communities knit together as "series of subordinate harmonies"⁸ a difference in sameness with no discordant note to spoil the harmony of cosmic symphony. Such is the plan and principle in the birth and growth of Mahabharata as an epitome of this "Vast and interdependent economy of the world." It is only thus can each individual and nation perfect itself and help to "consummate the harmony which is one and universal."⁹ In the compound word Maha-Bharat, the Greater India, Maha is the suggestive of the Supreme or the Absolute. 'Bha' means Light, Power and Consciousness of the Absolute. While 'rati' is the lover and worshipper of 'Bha, aspiring to possess and manifest the light, power and consciousness of the Absolute. Thus we are the children of Light, ever growing and expanding and stretching our arms to envelope the globe in relationship of love.

The soul-power that gave birth to Mahabharata, goads and enjoins us to uphold the banner of 'dharma' the principle of the right-conduct, the right rule in the midst of the paradoxical and perplexing situations of the world, and much so at the time when the nations—for fear or greed—have entered into a dreadful arms race. At this crucial juncture of the history, when the atom bomb has spoken its final word, it is more important to be the lovers of truth and light, the only healing power in the midst of warring nations. Indians by nature are worshippers of the Divine, the soldiers of Light, the tillers of Land, and Nationalism for us is an Avatar, the mounting tongue of Vedic Fire, rising to eliminate the titanic powers threatening to destroy the budding global family. The intuitive vision of Sri Aurobindo discerned India as "the guru of the nations, the physician of the human soul in its profounder maladies; she is destined once more to new mould the life of the world and restore the peace of the human spirit."

Spirituality, the kindled Vedic flames have never ceased to be. It has kept the country alive in the midst of invasions, downfall and degradation. The spirituality in the true sense was practiced and realized only by the few of her giant sons. It has not yet entered into the bosom and business

of the people. Unfortunately, the stream of Light ebbed and flowed through centuries, eclipsing time-to-time, yet shining dazzling bright in the times of crisis. It reincarnates like the soul of man, giving new birth and orientation to the country at the time when everything seems to be lost. It is never a life denying, or a world negating process, as much as an art of living that bestows an insight into the Being that fulfils life by changing the sordid and ugly atmosphere of the world. For "true spirituality" voices the Mother, in a message given in January 26, 1963. "Is not to renounce life, but to make life perfect with the divine perfection. That is what India must show to the world now."¹⁰ Spirituality, like love is too often profaned to be confused with occult or mental powers, or a religious sentiment of escape from life into some otherworldly heaven of pleasures. What people worship here is a fringe of the iceberg of spirituality or the 'adyatam vidya' that transcends our mental constructions, vital demands, and the convenience of the physical satisfactions. For, it is not a human way of knowing, but a divine way of being and becoming a 'million-bodied one.' Spirituality is not a talk or discourse; for knowledge is experience, 'anubhava' or 'samsparsa,' an encounter with the Divine. The power and light can uplift, transmute life and mind stuff and spiritualise the material consciousness.

It is because of the 'Adyatam Vidya,' the spirituality proper; India from the very beginning of her history has been a multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-racial society, protecting and sheltering people of different faiths; politically suppressed and prosecuted in their own lands. Almost all living faiths of the world are here. "The Jews came to us," Dr. Radhakrishnan observes, "when the Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed in the first century A.D. The Christians came to us in the early centuries of the Christian era. Zoroastrains came to us when Islam occupied Iran. And the Muslims came to us in the 7th and 8th centuries A.D."¹¹ It is the beauty of 'dharma' or the law of spirituality that envelops everything in Love's supreme power of transformation. It has an alchemic power to absorb, assimilate and create anew all that is assimilated in a vision of the myriad-minded Truth variously expressed and embodied in countless forms of Nature, and communicated through different languages of various faiths. It is out of this sublime vision, the unity is born like different rivers from the Himalayas, moving in different directions yet always one with the sea, even though singing the songs

of the Infinite variously according to the path they have adopted. This is spiritual-secularism, "sarva-dharma samanvay;" the multi-mooded Oneness that is same in difference as identity in separateness, the Whole in the heart of man. It lays the foundation of the World union, the birth of a global family, 'vasudeva kulumbkam;' the widening arc of global consciousness transcending the walls of individual, and universal separation in a rapturous embrace of the supreme transcendence.

Such is the form and meaning of Indian nationalism. It is 'sanatan' power, a perennial stream of eternal verities. Being catholic and universal, in application, the word of wisdom it enshrines has for its aim the fourfold perfection of man and the eventual spiritualisation of earth-consciousness. Its universality lies in its appeal to all men of sense. Above all, it is meant for all classes living in different conditions. Spirituality, the fountainhead of India's nationalism can never be a function of a group, race or nation, as it is not for an individual salvation, but for the universal emancipation as "I am a single self all Nature fills" and my salvation is for all because:

"My Life is the life of village and continent,
I am earth's agony and her throbs of bliss.
I share all creatures' sorrow and content,
And feel the passage of every stab and kiss."¹²

The ancient Hind—once powerful Hind—has a body, an organic life and moral and aesthetic temperament, the mind and soul for the sake of which they exist. That is the reason, why India never worshipped politicians, wealth and military power for their own sake as to recall Emerson's phrase. She had "hitched" her "wagon to a star." Here politics or political freedom has a moral aim to awaken people to the spiritual possibilities of the race to a profounder sense of its soul, in which politics, social questions, theology, philosophy, literature science, etc. are stepping stones to be included in Dharma; the national religion that has universal dimensions in application.

This is the principle involved in the birth, growth and continuing of the Ancient Hind. It is the accumulated spiritual-shakti, kept alive and invigorating by her poet-seers, sages, gurus, avatars and saints from age to age, to let the flame never die out. The divine incubation from time

to time has kept culture of brahma-vidya alive and wafting its fragrance in the global Consciousness. The culture that gave birth to the Indus-Saraswati civilization has survived in impossible conditions down to our times.

Now, India is on the crossroads, caught in a crisis; a tremendous upsurge of dark and violent forces of falsehood and evil seem to overwhelm her. Nonetheless, for the surprise of the world, a forward leap into the future is in preparation to baffle our understanding and confound the intelligence of the wise. For, unlike other nations, India of today in her attitude and orientation is not different from the Indus-Harappa civilization. In contrast we find a vast difference in the modern Egypt and the Egypt of the pharaohs nor is the Greece of Venizola, the Greece of Pericles. But, India of today is not fundamentally and essentially different from the India of the Vedas. Her outlook on life and things is the same as it was when she confronted in 3250 B.C Egypt and Babylon with a distinctive civilization. "Mussolini of twentieth century Italy," observes Nolini Kanta, "is no way related to Cato or Julius Caesar of ancient Rome, but Sri Ramakrishna or Sri Aurobindo is a direct decedents of the Vedic Rishis." This continuity of the ministrals of love is meant to revolutionize nation and prepare her for a big change in the world.

After Independence, it was expected that India would work for the ideal and new shape her life in terms of the Heritage, as India of the future could not be built on political freedom alone. Unfortunately, this could not be materialized. Consequently, we are to witness India's present degradation. The irony of the Indian intellectuals is that, their being proud of the squarl hoard of knowledge transported from the west and making it to be a measuring rod of life and existence. In their proud assumption, they attribute India's deterioration and downfall to her religion and spirituality, because their jaundiced eyes find serious faults in her culture. They do not understand if there would have been anything wrong in her culture and spirituality; how could then swami Vivekanada blow his couch on the international forum single-handedly. Fearing nothing, caring nothing, the swami with his lion-roar jolted the thinkers of the world, and awakened Indians from the dense slumber of 'tamas'? Did not Swami Vivekanada came across restless persons in America and Europe, dissatisfied with dollar made civilization; longing and anxious

to understand and live India's spiritual culture? Has not their number among scholars and common people alike been on the ascending scale since then?

If we analyze the factors and forces behind the rapid change that has overtaken the world, our wider and impartial comprehension shall reveal that the trend of the so-called "New Age" of the 1960's, owes as much to India as to America. Since the clarion call of Swami Vivekananda, a number of western universities started offering excellent courses on various aspects of Indian civilization. Physics is steadily becoming spiritual philosophy and some physicists try to show parallels between quantum mechanics and yoga science. The Western ecologists call for the recognition of our deeper connection with Nature, such as we find in the Indian view of the world. Even the psychologists have started learning from Indian insights into human nature. One is likely to find a corner for "Asian spirituality" in any bookshop of the west. "In France," writes Machiel Danino, "Buddhism is at present the fastest growing religion (even as churches are alarmed at the decreasing attendance, some forced to close) and more than half of French population is said to believe in re-incarnation and karma."¹⁴

This universal acceptance and applicability cannot render Indian culture a hackneyed bundle of religious cries of barbarians worshipping the elemental forces of Nature in fear and supplication. Indian culture is not obsolete but ancient, yet new for its approach to life and existence is at once rational, scientific, ethical and psychological. Is not in the "politically correct" view of the self-appointed guardians of thought a great blindness compelling us with their facile thinking that blindly persuade us to throw our relics of the past, give up our Heritage, discard our culture and adopt the so-called progressive thought, methods and behaviour of the west? The lust for power, greed for money, petty-party interests, jealousy, and habit of corruption do not allow them to come out of the mud and mire of falsehood. Their open eyes with blinded vision are bereft of the inner listening, as they are hypnotized by the precautionary words of the western thinkers who themselves are caught and helpless in a system that they have neither knowledge nor power to control it. The so-called western thinkers pass their lives in the sickness of world-weariness grappling with the problems of existence only to complicate them. Pierre Thullier, a French historian of science has penetratingly analyzed the

maladies afflicting the West. According to him, the west for all its talk of "progress" and "civilization" has become as fragile as an eggshell. And "those who profess to be progressive clearly, no longer know what a culture is.... In their eyes, a society is dead only when it is physically destroyed; they do not realize that the decay of civilization is inner before anything else."¹⁵ Again, the great French writer Andre Malraux's observation: "I see in Europe a carefully ordered barbarism" strikes the mark by laying bare the malady of the west.

The restless Europe caught in the commercial tyranny is groping in the material darkness for light that comes from the East, as an antidote for the modern malady. For its institutions, systems, everything linked with political governments have been condemned as useless. Wealth and power ought to be enjoyed by all, as all are equal before the law that makes all for each and each for all in tune with the holy plan of Nature, where each flower breathes the air it enjoys. Instead, a few who do not work but manipulate the work of millions live in luxury: while the thousands live in dreadful conditions, imposed on them by the sinister-circus of political and social systems. It is the titanic-ego of the few grabbing the wealth and power that deluge the whole earth with blood. It would not be an exaggeration to say that "the west is governed by a handful of Shylocks" who make mockery of constitutional government, freedom and parliaments. More than a hundred year ago, Swami Vivekanada, on the return of his first visit to the west, warned in a prophetic strain that the "whole western civilization will crumble to pieces in the next fifty years if there is no spiritual foundation."¹⁶

The material glitter of the dollar-bosses is too strong for those Indians blindly imitating the West, for this "glitter" is not the 'gold' or 'hirnamay' as it lures them away in the arms of Ego and desire to be caught in an unending whirl of falsehood and ignorance. Conditioned by the civilized mechanism of the western machinery; we do not grasp the "hollowness" of the Western mind that foretells the advancing decay of its civilization. Indians infatuated by the material opulence of the west fail to understand its 'anguish,' because being caught in the surface glitter they lack thought-power to delve deeper and feel the pulse of things in the west. The life and society, in the west are not as rosy as we fancy. The West too has its share of corruption, poverty, illiteracy, want and disease. Its selfish utilitarian standards of dollar diplomacy have generated an aggressive

cutthroat world competition turning this globe into an arms-bazaar of gigantic commercial market. There are hardly few western economies that can survive without massive arms sale. Most of the time they remain busy in selling deadly weapons to third-world countries; fueling hundred of wars around the globe. At the same time, they feign to be 'pacifists' preaching peace, shouting for human rights to suit their commercially motivated criminal game of political diplomacy. How strange! Is not this "civilization" what as Satprem observes, "a machine built by the infernal gods for the mathematical annihilation of a mortal."¹⁷

Did not we notice the irrational absurdity of in human callousness in the beef war of Europe in defense of "mad cows"? Did not it turn to be a bone of contention when the prime minister of Britain made the declaration, that the beef was central to British culture? Does a man become cultured or civilized with the relish of mutton or beef? Is not in the west, the so-called cultured people with powerful associations and strong lobbies violently defending their right to hunt and kill? They are prone to call themselves advanced and civilised, because they can shoot thousands of migratory birds in flight. They call it the most refined pleasure. What's refinement in such sports?

It would be dangerous to build our nation on the shaky foundation of the mechanical civilization of the West. The Indian history took a tragic turn, the day after independence when her leaders and politicians turned their back to the ideals of Nationalism, neglecting the world's lofty culture by allowing it to become marginalized in its own land. Have not the people at the helm of affairs by this neglect of dharma of the land, mismanaged the country, her resources, and brought about the present degradation? Is not the politics of crooks and criminals ruling the country? Have not they made the daily life of honest Indians a hopeless hell? Why are good, honest, talented and cultured gentry sunk in despair, and capable men forced to leave this hell and fly to some "heaven" across the seas; where they do not have to pay bribe at every step to prove that they are backward before going forward, so that their talents are used rather disparaged and crippled?

No doubt, the downfall or stagnation of India had begun before the stormy invasions of Muslims, yet the responsibility lay on the children of the soil. The invasions only helped the Britishers to conquer India easily,

who took advantage of our ignorance and weakness to divide the country and rule and spread their missionary culture like a wild fire to Christianize India. The English, systematically tried to stamp on the minds of people the type of education contrary to the native temper, culture and civilization. By destroying native industries, crafts, literature and spiritual science; the Britishers proved counter to the nature of man with the colonial culture that worked against the emergence of global sense in man. "English rule" observes Sri Aurobindo, "undermined and deprived of living strength all the pre-existing centres and instruments of Indian social life and by a sort of unperceived rodent process left it only a rotting shell without expansive power or any better defensive force than the force of inertia."¹⁸ Thus, in our blind imitation of the west, the habit, as Tagore said of picking up rags from the dustbins of others, there was the loss of original thought. With this loss, we fell into the trap of pseudo-democratic civilization materially scientific, empirically rational and commercially industrial.

With all this, we ought not to blame the Muslim invasions or the British rulers for the downfall of India. Nature brings what one deserves and one gets the return of one's thoughts and actions. Moreover, the cause of a phenomenon lies within the phenomena as every act reacts on the doer without his being aware of it. We are responsible for our downfall and stagnation. We are to be blamed for this uncertainty, insecurity, fear and danger in which we breathe and live. In the post-independence era; the talented leaders, the enthusiastic politicians had a God-gifted opportunity of newly gained truncated political freedom; to set the country on a right swing by assimilating all that is noble in the West in terms of the soul and culture of the country. Contrary to this, the ineberation of newly attained power turned the heads of politicians and, they started a rat race in imitation of the West. To keep themselves revolving in the "musical chairs"; they began to kindle the lurid flames of petty-party interests catering to the ambitions of individual leaders. What have these politicians done? Their ambitions have systematically worked to divide nation into communities. With their exploitation of religious sentiments, dabbling with caste feelings, language issues or no issues, they perverted democracy into a vote-bank diplomacy of befooling majority, throwing dust into the eyes of three godheads Freedom-Fraternity-Equality.

In the post-independence era the creeping snake of corruption started spreading its coils around the politicians. The government grew more and more unwieldy, corrupt, unaccountable bureaucrats; police officials more and more greedy, callous, oblivious and contemptuous of man in the street or the man in a village. Look at our cities; how congested, polluted and unclean they are. There are yet millions of illiterates asking for light and happiness. Everything is twisted, tortured and turned upwards down. People suffer from injustice, indifference and red-tapism. No paper or file is moved in the office without greasing the palm of a corrupt official. Merit, talent, character and quality are the things of the past. One cannot get a job or seek admission in a college without bribe or call it a civilized way of donation. It is as Michel Danino rightly puts it, "we have come to accept that the dharma of those in power is to live off the fat of the land even more shamelessly than our British rulers ever did,"¹⁹ selfish to the extreme, dividing and killing people for money and power.

The inefficient, self-contained, arrogant politicians; the visionless regional leaders have reduced the body-politics to a carcass; fit to be burnt or buried under the debris of the fading past. The body bereft of thought and energy is a festering evil spreading infection and disease. Politicians often talk of tolerance, but in their tolerance, there's nothing of the Gandhian soul-strength. Their tolerance is a sign of cowardice, a mask to cover their weakness and guilty conscience. Their nexus with criminals and corruption is un-Gandhian, and it has made politics a "goonda-raj" which every good, honest, capable and cultured man shuns and despises.

What an irony of fate, it is that the intellectuals who could have led the country are hypnotized by the West! Are not there pseudo-intellectuals, boisterous reformers, and loud-mouth politicians wearing the gab of public servants only to fish in the troubled waters? They eloquently criticize our village superstitions, simple beliefs of people while closing eyes on the worse superstitions of perverted "socialism," secularism and other isms. In a fit of passion they will talk of Sati and child marriage but fail to give us reason for suicides that thousands of desperate young Indians commit every year. They talk of removing poverty; yet exploit and kill thousands. Their vested interests do not allow them to devise any "concrete action to stop looting of the country at the hands of the

ruling elite." We laugh at their stupidity condemning caste outwardly for a temporary favour; yet exploiting it indirectly by putting one community against another "more systematically than the British did."²⁰

The namesake leaders and politicians of the post-independence period, in their pursuit of power and wealth, followed downward path of easy and comfortable life of utility, and self-interest with no strength to ascend the lofty peaks of nationalism. Because, in following the lofty and sublime principles enshrined in our culture, we require sacrifice and self-discipline, which is a hard nut to crack for the unscrupulous politicians with skin-deep consciousness given to the worship of almighty dollar, sex and belly cheer. How could they read and figure out those thousands pages of the ancient scriptures talking about the duties of rulers towards their subjects. The 'drama' of the ruler accepts all that is noble and good in the foreign culture but it carries its own standpoint that has the power to open out a "new vistas of thought before the greatful world." In the operation of 'dharma' as a principle of existence, the past is transformed in terms of the present ushering into an ever-widening circumference of the future. According to Sri Aurobindo, "the claims of our future with its immediate possibilities should be still more sacred."²¹

The vociferous protests against Indian culture by those, who term it absolute, and wishfully think it be out of tune with the spirit of the age are cries in the wilderness, and soon the sand dunes shall roll over them. Such protests are prejudiced voices of those; who hate all that is Indian, being under the grip of narco-dollar bosses manipulating them from the alien shore. Enemy is within. We are our own friend and enemy, by being Indian, yet thinking and acting unlike Indian. No power could have injured us; nothing could harm and alarm us, unless we choose to be weak and live in ignorance. Thus thundered Swami Vivekanada in his censoring tone: "Too much of inactivity, too much of weakness, too much of hypnotism has been and is upon our race."²²

We do not self-discipline ourselves to apply ideas in life and live in the ancient Word of wisdom that has the power to evolve a new world order. Being timeless it is always modern as modern as Indian of the Harappan times, when our people invented decimal system and measured the periods of rotation of the planets. We were still ancient and as modern as when our pristine fathers pioneered discoveries in mathematics,

astronomy, surgery, construction and agriculture techniques. Were not our people modern when they "cast the iron pillar which still stands in south Delhi and challenges today's metallurgists with its non-rusting properties"? Are not India's bright and talented persons, migrated to the west (being discouraged here) more successful than the average Westerner? Is not it truism when Michel Dinano says, "withdraw overnight all Indians from the U.S.A. and the country will be paralyzed?"²³ Does not it show that "Indians can still be modern, efficient, hardworking," provided there is capable and sincere leadership, an integral system of education aiming at fourfold-perfection of man.

Our hope to live as a civilized nation depends, how far there is brought about a phoenix-birth of our crumbling, corrupt political, educational and social institutions by rekindling the flame of spiritual culture in the forms that are new, supple and plastic to contain the ancient flaming force. This kindling or churning the butter of the national mind is a mode of educational sadhana, aiming at "man-making" and "character building," that steadily moves towards a "manifestation of perfection already in man" as an integral part of a living social phenomenon. Therefore, it would be "lunatic absurdity for us this moment," warns Sri Aurobindo, "to build blindly on the sinking foundation of the West. When the most advanced minds of the occident are beginning to turn in the red evening of the West for the hope of a new and more spiritual civilization to the genius of Asia, it would be strange if we could think of nothing better than the cast away our own Self and potentialities put our trust in the dissolving and moribund past Europe."²⁴

In the west itself, there is an undeniable need for 'something,' which neither science nor western religions have been able to meet. This, "something" hidden behind the veil has the power to give us an in-look and up-look to shape a new earth life; transform animal-man into a man-divine, and "build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering."²⁵ The historian, Will Durant, anticipated this truth of Indian culture in 1950's when he wrote: "It is true that, even across the Himalayan barrier, India has sent us questionable gifts as grammar and logic, philosophy and fables, hypnotism and chess; above all, our numerals and our decimal system." These are only surface gains of her oceanic culture; for deeper within lay pearls and diamonds yet

unexplored. To quote Will Durant, "these are not the essence of her spirit; they are trifles compared to what we may learn from her in the future."²⁶

The culture and philosophy of India is held in high acclaim. It is universally accepted by the men of sense throughout the world that there is in it nothing 'obsolete' or out of its proper time and belonging to the past. The people who inherit such a treasure are always advanced and modern. That is what Professor Huxley admits; "To say nothing of Hindu sages, to whom evolution was a familiar notion long before Paul of Tarsus was born." Referring to this point Sir Mornier Williams says; "indeed I may be allowed to anachronism, the Hindus were Spinozites more than two thousand years before the existence of Spinoza, and Darwinians many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time, and before any word like 'evolution' existed in any language of the world."²⁷ Looking at the height and depths of India's culture, her steady cultural victory of the world we can say with the great French Philosopher, Victor Cousin that "India contains the whole history of philosophy in a nutshell." The lovers of wisdom; longing to tread the path of the truth are gradually discovering in the poetical and philosophical monuments of India, "many a truth" to quote Victor Cousin, "and truths so profound, and which makes such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which the European genius has sometimes stopped, that we are constraint to bend the knee before the philosophy of the East, and see in the cradle of the human race, the native land of the highest philosophy." The insight of Frederic Schlegel, penetrating deeper into the realms of the gold to discover in his book on "Indian Languages; Literature and Philosophy," that the European loftiest philosophy of idealism of reason are in "comparison with the abundant light and vigour of oriental idealism like a feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory of the noon day sun, flattering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished."

This growing interest of the West in India's spirituality—not in her political and bureaucratic systems—amply proves that with all its defects; the Indian substance remains among the best in the world. Such is the experience of Swami Vivekananda, Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and lots of others. The early European travelers have already attested it. However, it is not new to us, yet it is a great inspiration to be awakened to the glory and

sublimity of our own heritage with its power to lead us from darkness, and pattern a new world order of universal brotherhood in the arms of our ideal Nationalism. By Awakening we mean, reversing the tide of hostile powers and rebuilding India anew according to her inherent law of existence. The India's renaissance is the birth of the ancient spirit; the "new Light" that has touched the earth and a "new Truth" of Nationalism has long since taken its birth. Our fundamental task that Swami Vivekanada has chalked out for us is "man-making" and "character-building" education of the national mind as the "basis of all systems social or political rests upon the goodness of man." A country cannot be great and strong, simply because it has the Legislator, Executive and Judiciary, but that there are men of character, working in these three parts of the government who can stand fast and even suffer long for truth and honour of Mother India. The crystal-clear words of Swami Vivekanada are democracy taking spiritual wings: "No religion is great or good because parliament enacts this or that, but because its men are great and good. Men are more valuable than all the wealth of the world."

The roots of our cultural Tree are firm and go far deeper into prehistoric times. That is why, the Tree could weather centuries of storms and survive in the impossible millenniums. Now due to our neglect, ignorance and dealings in falsehood, the gigantic tree has overgrown with the creepers and thorns of our narrowness and hatred. The tree has developed some dead branches; its foot is hidden with weeds of our inconscience, inertia and lassitude. Moreover, the lurking hostile powers, the Dassa, Pani and Vala of the Vedic times are taking hold of Nature, and are yet to be vanquished. Dear Indians, at this critical "hour" we are bound in a sacred bond. Our most important task is to clear the mess, chop off the dead branches, prune a few branches and give the Tree a new youth. For, in the survival and continuity of the Tree depends the future of our nation, and by following its principles we shall diffuse the waves of light and peace and brotherhood into the sordid atmosphere of the global consciousness.

Therefore, the growth of Nationalism, the dream of the united India is an inevitable and indispensable factor in our survival in this world of discord and division, heading towards some unpredictable tragedy. The unity we are trying to establish cannot be brought about by any

mechanical means or political adjustments; as such attempts have proved abortive. "Do you imagine," asks Plato in "The Republic," "that political constitutions spring from a tree or a rock and not from the dispositions of citizens which turn the scale and draw all else in their direction. The constitutions are as the men are and grow out of their characters." People must be willing to change, because it is with the change of hearts, there is an alteration in the colour of consciousness, and the unity is realized like peace at the heart of storm.

Our Nationalism rooted in the experience of Unity is a vision of man's evolving Godhead imprisoned (at present) in the Inconscience of Nature, shut within the narrow creeds and ideologies of nations. Yet, the widening circumference shall perforce humanity to break open all racial and national bonds to realize the Divinity within, and emerge like butterflies into the sunlit fields of global consciousness of oneness. Mother India, exhorts us to come out of the cocoons of ignorance, falsehood, pull down the walls of castes and religions that divide and separate; throw away the masks of birth and rank, class and colour, creed and nationality. These trappings of false shows are born out of the ignorance of man's real nature and purpose in life. They go against the principles of Nationalism. These are man-made shelters and trenches; the hiding places of falsehood which cut-off man from the stream of humanity, and invite the wrath of Nature for violating the 'holy plan.' These hiding places are the dealings of Falsehood that blind our eyesight and do not allow man to see himself in his fellow beings. These 'puras' or shelters of the 'asuras' of the old, in which different communities of the Earth imprison and feel themselves safe to wage war against their own souls—a war of defense and aggression, a war of nations, a war of continents, a war of classes, a war of colour with colour—till man annihilates the Self by the self and passes into nothingness and lost for ever in "The black Inconscient script."²⁸

Nationalism cannot flourish until such barbarism like poisonous weeds continue to thrive in a Garden unkept and unlooked for. As the ideals of Nationalism seek to end the war that man wages against him, for by injuring others he injures himself. Moreover, the wisdom of spiritual culture garlands man with man; joins a community into the folds of other community; nation with nation and all that exists in Nature on the "basis of common sympathy, aims, highest interests of the future."²⁹ Therefore, the Nationalism is a way of life, a ray of light to guide humanity towards

its highest destiny to experience the motherhood of the Earth, the universal brotherhood of a global family, 'vasudeva-kutambkam.' The 'Vasudeva-kutambkam;' a widening circumference of the Consciousness-Force is all-pervading million-bodied One, 'vasudeva' embodying, emerging and evolving a wider national-consciousness that grows and glows from age to age.

Therefore, Renaissance in India is always the new birth of the ancient spirit that is always same today, yesterday and forever. Yet, when the old forms are gone and the fresh put on, 'the individual Divine grows, expands, appearing always fresh and new, neat and clean. This 'new birth' is the 'recovery' of India's 'time-old spirit,' her 'national ideas,' a fresh infusion of spiritualised vital and physical energy meant to give direction and purpose to the spirit of the age. It is also the rebirth of the men of direction and vision that appear at the call of the Time-Spirit with their flaming sword of knowledge, to disperse the sons of Darkness, change this lifeless, imitative political life of India, and breathe the Himalayan breath into the fast degenerating social life of the Indians.

Sri Aurobindo, the architect of Indian renaissance knew that the "new birth" in India has repercussions on the global consciousness, "a thing of immense importance both to herself and to the world." Moreover, this 'birth' is the "re-arising of the force very different from the mentality and spirit that have hitherto governed the modern idea on mankind."³⁰ This breath of the Spirit enables the nation to express her life in manifold forms of activity "in which man seeks to express in strength and delight of the expansive spirit within."³¹

The divine orientation of Nationalism, or the Religion of Nationalism connects us with the perennial source of all consciousness, knowledge and bliss. It is a living continuity of the past, moulding the present in a way we think, live, move and act individually and collectively. It is the spiritual Nationalism, inspired by God for the salvation of humanity. It is a type of education that cultivate the minds of people, that each is able to realise God in Nation, in hundred crore living temples of the Divine. It is not a mere "political programme," nor a "larger kind of selfishness" but an awakened collective consciousness in which an individual finds himself in all, and all is fulfilled with the perfection of

the individual. In this attitude of people, nationality becomes the Human Race, not a political religion of insolence of pride ending in as grim and ghastly tragedy.

It is true that a common blood, a common tongue and a common relation are powerful ingredients in the making of a nation. But the touch of the soil, nourishing us from cradle to grave, is an invigorating impulse of oneness that makes a nation exist, continue and grow progressively. Sri Aurobindo envisages a type of people lifting nationalism to a new pinnacle; justifying the separate existence, separate effort of a whole people in fundamental unity with entire humanity. The ideal nationalism overleaps every barrier, seeks unity of brothers, equals, and freemen. It does not obliterate individual distinctions or variety in Nature. It seeks the countless facets of the Truth; sought through different ways. And by removing obstacles to unity it discerns and feels what penetrates thought and what is hidden behind the name and form.

Nationalism is a spiritual consciousness, the Divine playing through the mind, life and body of the Nation. In the working of the Divine in and through the hundred crore people of India, politics, social questions, theology or philosophy, literature, science are means to an end; to be utilized in the integral perfection of man. When we feel, it is not a geographical isolation or a military-oriented political power that we call nation but Mother India, the soul of the country working in and through the people of the country we call it Nationalism. Here lies our unity and the principle of relationship that transcends all caste, colour, creed and nationality. India, in the words of Vincent Smith, "possesses a deep underlying fundamental unity, for more profound than produced either by geographical isolation or by political suzerainty. That unity transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, colour, language, dress, manners and sect."³²

The unity carries an everlasting note of reality; it demands that country be organized beyond politics aiming at the building of the nation. It is a call to those, whose bodies are made in the womb of Indian mother who have a heart that can feel for India, a brain that can think and plan for her greatness. Selfish, ignorant, egoistic politicians, leaders wallowing in the mud-puddle of ugly politics of bickerings and bandying taunts with fierce passions take sadistic pleasure in criminal acts and mob violence

consuming the country. Moreover, their second-hand opinions, ideas of reform that they impose on masses fragmentize society in groups, nation in states and states in regions—all a heterogeneous mass, jostling together in a selfish commercial race of aggressive competition.

The shallow and flimsy political attitude of politicians is tied up in knots of "me" and "mine." It is responsible for reducing democracy into mobocracy, the quality smothered into quantity resulting brain drain in the country. The dog is obeyed in the office, stupidity rules and 'genius' is thrust aside into the hedges. Alas!

"... 'Tis the curse of the service,

Preferment goes by letter and affection."

—*Shakespeare: Othello.*

The hundred years of British rule have left them "completely rotten," a mischief-mongering lot, who make lot of noise with their high sounding words to cover their black deeds under innocent masks. What a mess they have made of the government and the administration! They are of those that will not serve God as devil bids them to be corrupt and corrupt everything, commercialize education and turn the temples of learning into the breeding places of evil. They are caught in the cobwebs of their making; everything is going out of their control. They live in fear-psychosis; apprehending every moment some unforeseen catastrophe. As Shakespeare rightly points out:

'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus,

Our bodies are our gardens,

To which our wills are gardeners,

Why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills.'

—*Othello, Act I, Scene III.*

The Western ideas they have picked up now fail to work, as these are already 'bad enough for the West itself and they become pestilential here.' The perversion of democracy has made politics the game of criminal politicians or the politicians having nexus with criminal elements. It is a game of vote-bank diplomacy of hoodwinked elections in which

majority is ruled by the muscle and money power of the few. It is not the collectivity of people that control things, but "a few scoundrels who push themselves forward saying, 'I represent this, I represent that' are at the helm of affairs. And it is their 'this' and 'that' that brews strikes, new outbreaks of revolution and anarchy becomes an unavoidable feature of the social and national life. This is how they fish in the troubled waters.

Ah! If the leaders, politicians, reformers could reform themselves first be men of character, creative thinkers and selfless workers; then they would spontaneously display the power to reform others. Then with courage and fortitude they would represent the Nation and live in the soul of the country. Self-disciplined men of character would be honest and capable to govern through union, mutual understanding and collaboration; knowing what the Mother means: "The greatness of a country does not depend on the victory of a party but the union of all parties."³³ Mother India exhorts every Indian to overgrow your egoistic personality and bathe in her light. For, bathing in that Light, one has to discipline oneself, fulfil one's duty honestly and with rectitude. Mother, the Soul of India has never forsaken her children even in the days of darkest depression even "when they turned away from thy voice, served other masters and denied thee..." Let us pray that She "guide us so that we may be always on the side of great ideas and show to men thy true visage, as a leader in the ways of the spirit and a friend and helper of all the peoples."³⁴

The unity is not a commodity to be got from outside. Just as there is a mystic motive in the drift of Suns and Stars, so is there the soul of a nation, which the nation has to find before the union of the World is possible. Family, nationality, and humanity like Body, Life and Mind are the three strides of the 'Dwarf-Divine,' the form and emanation of the million-bodied Vishnu. According to Sri Aurobindo, "God's world advances step by step fulfilling the lesser unit before it seriously attempts the larger." Therefore he says, "Affirm free nationality first, if thou wouldst ever bring the world to be one nation."³⁵ In the fulfilment and perfection of the first step, the dream had to grow into a mighty tree of Nationalism, spreading its branches of global consciousness to get ready for the third stride of Divine leap of world union.

To us 'every step forward is a battle,' the third stride in the preparation is an adventure of Consciousness, amidst the fury and storm of the 'asuric powers,' raging within and encircling us from outside. Enemy within is more formidable and India is to be saved from the Indians first. Whatever the opposition, our Nationalism is not going to be crushed. For, the prophet of Nationalism and the lover of Humanity, Sri Aurobindo's burning faith is that "Nationalism survives with the strength of God, and it is not possible to crush it, whatever weapons are brought against it; Nationalism is immortal."³⁶ It is for Avatar the battle for Light; the digging deep and long in the mud and mire of fear, falsehood, ignorance, limitations and obscurity to prepare a bed for the golden river's song. Sri Aurobindo writes, "as in the ancient time, when the Avatars came, there were also born the mightiest daityas and asuras to face the avatars, so it always is. You may be sure that if you embrace this religion of Nationalism, you will have to meet such tremendous forces as no mere material power can resist." Here comes the Gita to our rescue. By cultivating the Gita's attitude we can come out victorious out of the present impasse. The Gita hates blind violence; yet goads us to be heroic and despise impotent life of 'ahimsa' when the 'dharma' demands the use of force.

The Gita (as we shall find in the next chapter) is not for the escapist or for the ascetics or monks in monasteries and ashrams. For life is Kurukshetra, a battlefield and the place of Sadhana where we have to realize the Gita. In the midst of inner and outer Kurukshetra; while playing the game of football; we are inspired by the Gita to take the football of life out of darkness and passion straight towards the goal. The goal is the Victory of Light over the sons of Darkness that rule at present. It is for that "India" according to the Mother, "has become the symbolic representation of all the difficulties of modern mankind. India will be the land of its resurrection—the resurrection to a higher and truer life."³⁷ This next stride to 'a higher and truer life,' is a fierce fight for Light between the forces of Integration and the powers that began with the animal developing through savage to the modern man of machines. Now, these forces of disintegration are dreadfully mechanical with terrible weapons of warfare and destruction. The Gita as an antidote to modern malady is also way to conquer, and not to yield. The soul of India is the Warrior of Light, an embodiment of divine compassion, and it is His supreme love of calm-strength that does tolerate 'adharma,' weakness and

compromising creeds of soulless ahimsa. Moreover, 'the future structure of the world depends on India,' and God who created the world by "developing the many out of the one, the material out of the spiritual" is here to fulfil the Word given to Mother India:

"Arjuna, whenever there is decline of righteousness, and unrighteousness is in the ascendant, then I body Myself forth.... to protect the virtuous, destroy the evildoers" and set the wheel of Dharma towards an ascending scale of human evolution.

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Chapter - IX

RELEVANCE OF THE GITA IN THE PRESENT CRISIS

The Bhagavad Gita is one of the most comprehensive and universal treatises on the crises of an aspiring soul, evolving to the point of liberation from ignorance, weakness and fear of death. In introducing the English translation by Sir Charles Wilkins; Warren Hastings wrote with great prescience: "when the British Empire is lost in oblivion, when the sources of wealth and prosperity are not remembered, this scripture and lessons it contains will continue to inspire millions of people in this world." Carlyle in the course of his conversation with Emerson said about the Bhagavad-Gita: "This is the most inspiring book; it has brought comfort and consolation in my life – I hope it will do the same to you. Read it." The Gita's sadhana of dynamic spirituality is realized in the thick of action, through knowledge that illumines the inner space to make one see the Divine wrapped in heart's mystery. The 'mystery' and power enshrined in the Gita stirred the chords of Thoreau's heart when he exclaimed in such a strain: "In the mornings I bathe my intellect in the stupendous cosmological philosophy of the Bhagavad-Gita, in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seems puny and trivial."

In the chronology of Indian tradition, the Gita is said to be five thousand years old; yet its thought and wisdom is ever fresh and new; ready to comfort and console, inspire and enlighten people and save this materialistic civilization from sinking into oblivion. The relevance of the Gita depends on the spirit in which we approach to it. It is what we derive from it that is of value to humanity and its future. Moreover, we value a thing by its appeal to the men of sense in all ages, its continuity throughout the vicissitudes of Nature, so as to be universally acknowledged. "Teachings" of the Gita in the words of Sri Aurobindo,

"is universal whatever may have been its origins."¹ The Gita is relevant to the modern mind because of its being the most non-sectarian, inter-religious, psycho-spiritual book of the world; attracting attention of the sectarian idealism of people all over.

The Gita's 'sadhana' instills in us a vision of "Truth one and eternal," which is not a monopoly of a single Prophet; shut ones for all in a single book. This Truth of the Gita "cannot be shut up in a single trenchant formula,"² because of its broadminded perception that all paths lead to Thee and tolerance to perceive the truth underlying different systems. In the scheme of knowledge, the Gita finds a right place, explanation and relation of all other truth in the realization of the Truth one and eternal. We discern in the language, structure and thought of the Gita, a radiating wonder of Divine consciousness that radiates the power of harmony in the combination and balancing of ideas, wafting fragrance of non-sectarian attitude that has, as Sri Aurobindo aptly puts it, not a least trace of "the spirit of a rigorous analytical dialectics cutting off the one angle of the truth to exclude all the others; but rather there is a wide, undulating, encircling movement of ideas which is the manifestation of a vast synthetic mind and a rich synthetic experience."³ Yet, the thought is simple and knotty as Melville's blue-deep mystified by the whiteness of the whale. Therefore, we are to approach the Gita not with 'Scholastic or academical' attitude to scrutinise its thoughts and establish a system or support any system of the past and present. Ours is the modern man's search for soul who is groping in the dark due to an identity crisis. We want light from the Gita to save humanity from bewilderment, uncertainty and fear of the age. The man divided in himself is fragmented, frustrated and is groaning in the wasteland of his life.

This directionless age with its serious grappling of thought and ideologies has given rise to criss-cross currents of thought creating chaos and appalling complexity in the relationship of man with society, society and man and with Nature and 'Humanity'. Devoid of love, fellow feeling, respect, self-discipline, self-sacrifice and faith, people are reduced to Eliot's "hollow men;" living feverish and fretful life; haunted by ghoulish visions and torturing nightmares. Sensitive poet T. S. Eliot in his cryptic style akin to metaphysical caught this wasteland feature of civilization:

"We are the hollow men,
 We are the stuffed men,
 Leaning together,
 Headpiece filled with straw, alas!
 In our dry cellar,
 Shape without form, shade without colour,
 Paralyzed force, gesture without motion."

—*The Hollow Man.*

The modern man left alone in his emptiness is at the criss-cross roads of modern civilisation. His recoil from all religious pacts haunts him as a lingering painful memory of a waning past. To his sense the God of religions and the verities of spiritual truth being poles apart, have always been in conflict with each other like light and darkness. The world is gripped in a tremendous crisis. The modern man is at war with himself. In his hollowness, he becomes possessed by the Beast and delights in his animal behaviour, knowing like Sigmund Freud that man is a biological phenomena, a prey to instinctual desires; therefore, to be worse than an animal when animal is the apex of modern man's earthly glory. In his struggle for survival, he finds himself in the Darwinian tradition a part of nature. In the struggle between a capital and labour, he is further entangled in the economic and social forces of Marxists to be completely deformed and deprived by the dark forces of extreme selfishness, falsehood, pretence, cleverness, deceit, harshness, cruelty, rudeness and crookedness that have become order of the day. These are Kurovas, the sons of Darkness: outcome of the Age of confusion on its last legs to fight tooth and nail the powers of Light. We are driven to exclaim with the Duke of Albany in 'King Lear,' "Tis the times, plague when mad man lead the blind." These obscure mental ideologies merely scratch the surface consciousness of physical man, his incomplete picture and nature which is far from being true and whole. These are the fetters of woe. They do not touch the real man. For man has

"... that within which passeth show
 These but the trappings and suits of woe."

—*Shakespeare-Hamlet*

As such, man's 'bewilderment' and 'despair' observes De Sola Pinto, "has lost the traditional clues to the labyrinths of inner life."⁴ Here comes the relevance of the Gita; a way to secret treasure clue that keeps one fresh and new for "the actual living truths it contains" that are "suitable to the mentality and helpful to the spiritual needs of our present-day humanity."⁵ We can come out of the crises victorious, live in peace and power: if we discover and assert the Self by negating deluding self. At the dawn of Self-realization, knowledge and power are generated to fight Kurukshetra – the battle for Light—on two fronts: within and out. Man cannot adapt himself to the startling development in science and technology without spiritualising them and by discovering the fount of conscious Force that dominates all existence. The Self-discovery through Self-discipline is what the Gita "means the law imposed on itself by humanity as a substitute for the purely egoistic action of the natural unregenerate man and a control on his tendency to seek in the satisfaction of his desire the standard and aim of his life." Till our acts don't conform to the law of soul's evolution, working in tune with Nature's unveiling of the secret Mystery, which we are, humanity cannot come out of the crises and chaos. Drinking the milk of the Gita continuously in large doses, a deeper seeing is generated from within and a new world takes the birth. Knowledge dawns generating power in us to fight the battle for light and save 'dharm-kshetra' from malicious powers that disfigure, pervert and destroy with evil intentions. To do it, we have to become 'swarat,' self-master, and then only we can become 'Samrat,' the world-Master. Such is the nature and power of evolving Krishna-Consciousness realized through the Gita for the perfection of our Nationalism to set a new world-order in swing in the cradle of Love and relationship. The realization of the Krishna-consciousness in the true perspective is an antidote to modern malady. It rolls like sea in "the song celestial" as appreciated and admired and felt to be realizable by Emerson to Aldous Huxley and Andre Malraus and countless thinkers outside India. Not because it is the brief accessible text, and the only possible guide of ethics but more than what man believes and worship here. Moreover, it is not a mere "religious" or "Hindu" scripture but an art of living rooted in the science of Being.

This great scripture, a dialogue between the divine teacher and human disciple caught in a tragic crisis is similar to that of the present humanity, 'to be or not to be' i.e. to evolve towards the greater spiritual heights or

sink in inconscience and death. Of this Holy Scripture Mahatma Gandhi wrote: "Those who will meditate on the Gita will derive fresh joy and new meaning from it every day. There is not a single spiritual tangle which the Gita can not unravel." The Lord keeps the suffering Earth always in his arms. As he says: "I am the path, upholder, the master, the witness, the house and country, the refuge, the benignant friend; I am the birth and status and destruction of apparent existence. I am the imperishable seed of all and their eternal resting place... I am the silence of things secret and the knowledge of the knower... Nothing moving or unmoving, animate or inanimate in the world can be without me." (9:18, 10:38-39)

There is nothing sectarian in this declaration for the world and life of each form in existence is as the poet-seer sings:

"A play-ground and dwelling house of God,
Who hides himself in bird and beast and man
Sweetly to find himself again by love,
By oneness, His presence leads the rhythms of life
That seeks for mutual joy inspite of pain."⁶

'The Song Celestial,' as titled by Sir Edwin Arnold is the best known and most frequently translated Vedic religious texts. It is a colloquy, whose setting, by chance happened to be Kurukshetra, where the historic battle for Light was fought about 3000 B.C. Kurukshetra is the symbol of India representing 'dharm-kshetra,' the 'yoga-bhumi' in contrast to 'bhoga-bhumi,' where we have to find real truth, generate spiritual power, help humanity for its perfection and its highest spiritual welfare. The dialogue between the avatar Lord Krishna and the disciple Arjuna at the heart of clashing armies, creates ambiguity in the form of indecision of the warrior; who at the thought of killing his kith and kin is overwhelmed by gloom, attachment, helplessness like a disgusted Sannyasin desiring relief from the sorry scheme of things in his escape from the life's ordeals. There is a dramatic suspense in the situation. The mystery deepens and the landscape of battlefield takes a new colouring of strange curiosity of wait and watch.

Arjuna, the representative symbol of suffering humanity is burning in the lurid flames of physical desires, mental tortures, hollowness and attachment to forms of appearance. Like Arjuna, we can come out victorious in the inner war that is being objectively enacted on world's stage. When we "steep ourselves in the spirit of this great Scripture," the inner eyes open, and apprehend how the Lord mysteriously "hides himself in bird and beast and man." He is the soul evolving in humanity. Sadhana of the Gita crystalizes the centuries of evolution in a single life by accelerating the speed of change with its yoga in which knowledge-action and love meet in soul's single embrace -

"To draw the chequered scheme of mortal life
Into some semblance of the Immortal's plan,
To shape it closer to an image of God,
A little nearer to the Idea divine."⁸

It is where the Gita leads in the deepest sense. The problems of existence are turned into problems of Harmony. The practice of the Gita means living in the divine Consciousness. It infuses strength, self-confidence and brings elevation in thought. There is an inner opening; consciousness widens horizontally and vertically; a broader vision of life dawns, a deeper understanding of human nature opens new horizons. Devoid of ego and desire, man lives like a 'Hero' in the midst of crowd, yet preserving the sweetness of solitude, feeling the pulse of Silence at the heart of storm.

The Gita's warrior path of self-realisation is not an escape from life but an escape into life, living the life of sanyas in family or Girhast. It is renunciation in action through knowledge embodying in Love. It is a way of life, a golden beam of light, an art of self-scrutiny for ascending the peaks of self-realization. The Gita's knowledge of the Self is at once rational, ethical and spiritual founded on the psychic evolution of man, his purpose of living and goal. It recognizes the needs of mind, body and life; fulfills and perfects them with the light of knowledge hidden in the power of Action. Gita's spirituality is a wider and a deeper quest for the eternal in man and everywhere. It makes us grasp the purpose of 'how' and 'why' of things, the great question marks of existence that always tease us out of thought, forcing us to cry in nervous agitation like Shelly, -

"Why fear and dream and death and birth
 Cast on the daylight of this earth
 Such gloom...?"

Shelly, an "ineffectual angel" is unlike our pessimistic scientific humanism that sees man's aspirations and hopes, as Bertrand Russell puts it: "the outcome of chance collocations of atoms." The light of the Gita makes us feel the soul hidden in the dance of atoms. The realization of the five basic truths of the Gita has power to transform man into an illumined angel and unlike pessimists; the Song Celestial inspires us to sing as 'Savitri:'

"All is not here a blinded Nature's task:
 A Word, a Wisdom watches us from on high,
 Witness sanctioning her will and Works,
 A mystic motive drives the stars and suns."

The five basic truths are: The Eternal who is the Universal, the Individual and the Transcendent-all in one. The evolving souls are the living entities. Their nature and constitutional positions do not come out of nothing, as these souls-sparks persist eternally. Prakriti (material nature) is the executive force of the 'yoga Maya' of the Divine. Time, which represents a ceaseless change, is the duration of the existence of the Universe or the manifestation of material nature. These four basic truths: —the Lord Isvara, the souls in evolution, Prakriti or Nature and Time are eternal. The fifth truth, Karma (evolutionary experiences and seeds) ebb and flow for a period, but can be exhausted; its result burnt in the yogic fire. According to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupâda, "The Lord, the living entity, material nature and time are all interrelated and all immortal...where as karma is not eternal."⁹

The Gita is an experience of the Purusottama, the Supreme Person in which the formless, unchanging impersonal Brahman and the purusha-prakriti meet, as static and dynamic states of His 'cit-shakti,' the Conscious-Force. This is Krishna-consciousness, the same as the 'Brahmasanihita': "isvarah paramah Krsna sac-cid-a nanda vigraha/anadir adir govindah sarva-karama Karanam," i.e. Krsna is the cause of all causes. He is the primal cause, and he is the very form of eternal being, knowledge and bliss. His holiness goes on, "The complete whole is not

formless or if He is less than any other thing, then He cannot be complete whole. The complete whole must have everything within our experience and beyond our experience, otherwise it cannot be complete."¹⁰ This is "the deep demand of an infinite sense" aspiring for an answer to "its need of forms to house its bodiless thrills;"¹¹ the magic mystery enshrined in the person Krishna, the shepherd boy with flute driving—to use the Vedic phrase—'the cows of the sun' to forest glades and pastures of ever widening circumference of evolution.

The wisdom of the Gita is older than the Sun god, to whom (as the Lord informs Arjuna) this 'Gitopanisad' was first spoken. Suriya explained it to Manu, who in turn explained it to Iksvaku. In that way by disciple succession the Gita came down. In the course of time, it was lost; and in this present age of confusion Indians have totally neglected this soul energizing and country uniting Knowledge-Love-Karma Shakti of the Gita. Consequently, the Lord again revealed it to Arjuna (the humanity in tragic crisis) on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Through the instrumentality of the Gita, the Lord wants us to 'be conscious' of the truth that man is potentially divine, and goal is to manifest the divine; organize life and earth-consciousness around this principle of Harmony like planets around the sun. This is the highest virtue, the essence of Ethics, the destiny of humanity, and 'sanatan' or eternal occupation of the living entities. As such, 'Sanatana dharma' is not a sectarian process of religion based on a book or a prophet, which demands faith of the followers. Religions of creed, woven in the cobwebs of taboos and dogmas come and go. They begin in the annals of human history and are subject to change. But, the eternal function of the eternal living entities remains always the same-yesterday, today and forever—in relation with the eternal supreme Lord (as 'Savitri' puts it): "the harmonic order of Self's Vastitudes."

According to Ramanujacarya, the word 'sanatana' means "neither beginning nor end." Faith can change but the eternal function; the living activity of the immortal souls in the house of flesh cannot be taken or separated like liquidity from water and heat from fire. 'Dharma' or principle working in the evolution of man and Nature is 'sanatana,' because of its being non-sectarian, not limited to racial boundaries 'Dharma' or law of cosmic working has also individual dimensions in

helping to reveal us our "svarupa," the constitutional position of every living being. The supreme vocation of every living being is to render service to the supreme personality of Godhead hiding and growing in man and Nature. The Universe is the Body of God. Knowing this is 'dharma.' And serving and loving Him in family, society, nation and earth is the eternal religion or 'sanatana-dharma' of living beings. This is what the Lord advocates and He comes again and again to live and play in the lap of mother Earth and love and serve Himself in the form of humanity, for the delight and satisfaction of His own 'prakriti.'

We have in the Gita, the revival of the ancient view of "personality development" rooted in the discovery and experience of the true Individual other than the mind-life-body complex, which is always in a state of flux. That is changeless within the change upholding motion as beatings of nameless Word. In contrast to the western concept of personality development, embellished in petty human limits and weakness, the Gita replaces egocentric personality with the experience of the Divine in man. This alchemy melts ego in the light of soul with the act of sincere surrender that lits the flame of knowledge and love's lotus blooms. This "approach" of the Gita leads to our perfect fulfillment, and as Michel Danino puts it, "remains far ahead to anything two centuries of Western psychology have been able to offer to an increasing diseased humanity."¹² The Gita aims at an integral fulfilment of man. Therefore, it extols works, knowledge and devotion by turns, fusing them together. In this fusion, Love founded on knowledge becomes a dynamic power, a mighty action that accelerates, speeds up the tardy process of evolution and takes man towards supreme consummation:

"A flood of freedom and transcendent bliss,

Into immortal lines of beauty rose."¹³

In the encyclopedic vision of the Gita, knowledge and love is also karma-shakti, the conscious-force that energizes knowledge, awakens it from the dull abstractions, and changes it into the flame of Love utterly awakened to the supreme realization of the Divine. That is why our 'sannyas' or renunciation is in action, through knowledge transformed into a 'flame of Love.' Like a lotus in mud, the hero digs deep and long in the mud and mire of earth's inconscience and prepares a bed for Golden River's song.

Such is the God's labour in man and Nature. The Gita demands "inner renunciation;" leading to equality, consummation in a vision of the Self in the form of ladies and gentlemen, objects and forces of Nature, and in the form of the mysterious universe. Sri Aurobindo experienced and lived the Gita. And to the child's vision he is the Krishna-consciousness rising towards golden horizons for the future destiny of humanity. The Lord "promises us freedom for the spirit even in the midst of works and full energies of Nature, if we accept subjection of our whole being to that which is higher than the separating and limiting ego." This is what Arjuna could do i.e. to be ruled by the light different from the lurid-light of ego that separates, limits and creates clefts in consciousness. That is why he was overwhelmed by the crisis.

The Gita is the foundation of Integral yoga, upon which Sri Aurobindo built the "golden tower," in which the "flame-child," the warrior of Light is born after churning human helplessness, disgust, despondency, encircling gloom, suffering, destruction, ignorance and falsehood. These negative elements are Kurvas, the means the arch Enemy uses to keep humanity in thrall as galley slaves. Ever growing Krishna-consciousness churns the sea of Inconscience and draws out of it 'soma' of the old; the strengthening wine of everlasting bliss. The predicament of humanity, like Arjuna in crises is: whether to be a warrior of Light, leap into the battlefield of mighty action without any thought of success or failure, or loss or gain: or cut-clean, tear-off all bounds and shackles that bind one to earth and escape into some otherworldly existence. The problem of growth of consciousness out of confused and conflicting mind labouring in ignorance cannot be solved by an escape of any type. Pain and tragedy, life's miseries and calamities don't exhaust life or discourage its evolutionary impetus. The growth of consciousness slumbering in the arms of Inconscience is always through the flames of conflagration, which clear a wide space for a new structure of life and thought.

Arjuna's "visāda-yoga," the crisis or 'dharma-sankata' at the time of Shri Krishna's drawing his chariot in between two armies is the starting point of the Gita, when the warrior becomes nervous in grief at the thought of the family ruin. Arjuna's sense of guilt and sin, grips his mind and senses, and he becomes bewildered with confused understanding. Deprived of the sense of propriety, he behaves contrary to his normal

self and nature and cries in self-disgust and self-pity: "No I shall not fight."

Blessed indeed is Arjuna, for his crises drives him like iron towards the magnet-Divine. His 'dharma-sankata' or crises become an opportunity to be blessed by the divine wisdom and yoga that is the 'Bhagavad-Gita.' The sense of good and evil, sin and virtue, suffering and death have always exercised us with problems as hard nut to crack. Often when a crisis overwhelms people; they try to evade insoluble challenging problems, turn tail from the battlefield and escape from life. But no shrinking from responsibilities or any sort of escape can solve the riddle of life. Because, problems don't crop up due to the situations but the people who generate them in their ignorance of ordinary human consciousness "tossing and drifting under a drifting sky."¹⁴

The solution lies in facing the brute Drayodan; evil in man that broods sons of Darkness to give rise to challenging situations. Our flight to the Unknown is of no avail for the Gita's Unknown is "the Spirit who builds in Time," and works with his "immense powers" to materialize "a vaster world-purpose than the egoistic mind of individual or nation could mete with their yard-measure of narrow personal *idée* or communal interest and for which the motives and passions of governments and peoples were only tools or opportunities."¹⁵ Any kind of escape or compromise is not laudable for the children of the Mother to whom a touch of earth's flowery lap is thrilling and invigorating. We are in a "dharm-kshetra," the Field of Action, under the protection and direction of the Supreme Lawgiver and to whom we are bound to obey eternally. This is what we mean by 'Sanatana-dharma'—the principle of equilibrium that binds together like the law of gravitation the uniqueness of individual differences in a knot of relationship and love. As long as equilibrium is maintained, relationship and love continues as a working force of 'dharma' in thought and behaviour of people; an ordered march of the evolving soul is assured in the arms of the supreme Grace. 'Dharma,' (obedience to soul's nature) sets the path of growth and enlightenment free and flowing like the Himalayan stream one with the sea, yet singing and flowing to meet the sea. Our widening circumference of consciousness bursts its individual bonds to leap into the Virat Swroop or the Cosmic Body of the Supreme Transcendence:

“The joy, the cup of Nature cannot hold,
Had crowded to the beauty of his face,
Were waiting in the honey of his laugh.”¹⁶

It is in ‘dharma’ the fulfilment, achievement and eventual transformation of triple existence of mind-life-body is made probable. If ‘dharma,’ the divine order of existence is thwarted, its working disfigured, twisted or distorted or threatened to be annihilated by dark asuric forces, then the natural order of society, ecological balance of Nature, the knot of relationship and love, the principle of coexistence are shaken from the roots, badly disturbed, turned down by acute selfishness and torn apart into groups and sects. Therefore, the Kuravas, anti-dharmic powers raise their head and play their shots; let loose the dark storms of lust, monstrous greed, asuric ambition, ghosts of fear, jealousy, hate, violence and destruction. This is what we see in the prevailing tragic conditions of the world, the landscape of the earth overcast with dark clouds of some grim and ghastly tragedy, a long tale of earth’s suffering and woe terminating in catastrophe as the “dharma-kshetra” has become an arms bazaar of warring camps of opposite forces.

The men of skin-deep consciousness live in the blindness of darkness like Datarashtra. They are ruled by egocentric life, and obeying the behest of the desire-soul they wallow in the quagmire of ignorance and falsehood. The off-shoots of falsehood and ignorance are Kuravas i.e. ego, greed, selfishness, intolerance, arrogance, anger, depression, hate, desperation etc—the causes of War are the elements of asuric nature. And the nature of asura is to oppose, to obstruct every step forward towards the victory of ‘dharma’ or quality of ‘sattva’ in Nature. We have to be Pandavas, and take up the cross of sacrifice of the local self and to be the soldiers of the Divine. Then the Grace is with us. Arjuna, the representative of every refined, reflective and active human being; awakened to the reality of the Self is in conflict with social codes of conduct that choak freedom and growth of man. Arjuna caught in the cobwebs of despondency, disgust, gloom and indifference is stunned and bewildered. His nervous and confused introspection leads him to argue like saints: “Why should I fight if everything ends in death? What is the utility of victory won after wading through the blood of those whom we love and respect? Further, who knows which side falls the lot of victory?

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future of humanity, while Sri Krishna is not an expounder of any creed or religion but an invigorator of eternal soul-force in man and humanity.

The purpose of the Gita is to bring about a renaissance in man; lit the flame of true spirituality that does not regard earthly life a "temporal vanity," as the essential setting of India's spirituality was never an ideal of poverty, bareness and squalor. The Gita's spirituality is certainly not for making us "monastic ascetics." It is for the collective adventure for the advancement of human race, and for the nation's military, political, social, educational, artistic power and efficiency. Neither is it for moulding the life of national being to suit the limited dogmas, forms and tenets of a particular religion; for all paths lead to Me—nor is it a preparation for monastery or cavern or mountaintop.

The purpose of "Krsn-arjuna samvada" is to give us an insight into Reality, an encounter with the Divine: knowing and realising. The "brahma or atma-vidya" that the Gita enshrines is "samvada," not only a dialogue as much as the experience of the supreme person, the source of all consciousness and knowledge. The Gita's spiritual adventure and experience rejoins and harmonizes in a balance synthesis the fundamentals of the Vedas, Sankhya, Yoga and Vaishnava Theism adding new to them by widening their sphere of vision with its special kind of sadhana and vision that looks into millenniums. The Gita fuses together, the Vedantic realization "tat tvam asi" or 'that art thou' with the Sankhyan mechanism of Prakriti holding in equilibrium of Guns or Qualities this triple play of mental, vital and physical existence. This fusion, this blending is a wider and deeper synthesis made possible by an ever widening, steadily growing Krishna-Consciousness, that holds in His Conscious-Force the boundless silence of the Self, and this diverse-dynamic play of the creation in perfect embrace. The thought of the Gita sees unchanging eternal Self the foundation of all cosmic existence, untouched by the Maya of the three modes of prakriti: omnipotent in the created world. Yet Krishna-Consciousness is not pure Monism or Mayavada that conceives this world as 'serpent in the rope' or a 'mirage in a vast desert.' Although, it explains the created world the product of the double principle of Purusha and Prakriti; yet it sees no unbridgeable cleft in the two, but as reverse and obverse of the same coin, the two aspects of His Conscious-Force. Nor is the thought of the Gita pure

Vaishnava Theism; "although" as Sri Aurobindo clarifies, "it presents to us Krishna, who is the Avatar of Vishnu according to the Puranas, as the supreme deity, and allows no essential difference nor any actual superiority of the status of the indefinable relationless Brahman over that of the Lord of beings who is the Master of the universe and the Friend of all creatures."¹⁷

The supreme and final word of the Gita is to give up all 'dharma's' or religions and go within to visualize Me as the soul of each form, yet universal and transcendent in my supreme Form. Here is the test of courage and manliness in our casting to the winds of Time, all conventional formulas of belief and action, all fixed and external rules of conduct, constructions of all outward surface nature dharma's. Then are we capable of taking "refuge in the Divine alone" — 'mamakam sarnam' consummating through the integral surrender into "sarva dharman parityaja..." These mantric words sets free our inner space from the murky-clouds of cults and creeds, the criss-cross tensions of thoughts and desires. The fish-market state of mind is hushed into Silence and the eternal presence and power is drawn in my heart, mind and breathing frame. In this simple mental condition of "sarva dharman parityaja," we become the flute empty of ego and selfishness to touch the lips and be the instrument in the hands of Lord who is the only doer and enjoyer of work. The very power that moves the body or makes one think is the power of the Lord. And, we feel what the Master means when he says; "who so for lack of knowledge, seeth himself as the sole Actor, knoweth nought at all. And seeth nought... that:

"The subject that perceives,
The object — thing perceived,
In me like waves they double...
To me the world is a bubble.

— *Swami Rama Tirtha.*

A 'bubble' is a vibration of energy, a state of action trying to bring out what is within. In the Gita's gospel of Action, "Karma" is a force in operation. Everyone here is compelled to act as a sign of life, i.e. growth, movement, expression and expansion. The soul comes in this Field of Action—not in utter nakedness as "tabla rasa" of Locke—with a definite

in a sea of Krishna-Consciousness. 'Sastra' or the science of the Gita's spirituality is a harmonizing power of the Conscious-Force that differentiates and blends and new creates a being in an integral person. The absolute peace and bliss and the incessant action, the dynamic dance of creation the two arcs of Existence are ever united together like Sun and its rays or fire and its heat. The Gita is an open book, an evolving future of humanity, while Sri Krishna is not an expounder of any creed or religion but an invigorator of eternal soul-force in man and humanity.

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confused understanding of "The Song Celestial," like the Jain scriptures criticising Sri Krishna on much the same ground.

Let us for a while cast an impartial glance at the past record of East and the West; and underline the pages of history soaked in the blood of innocent humanity. We shall find hardly any page of Indian history (compared to the pages of the West) soaked by the genocide of other people, imposing a religion or political domination at gunpoint. The Indian history has no record of military conquest of other civilizations. So, how are we "war-mongering country?" Are not war-mongering tendency, aggressiveness and violence the breed of Western temperament and nature? Are not the pages of her history the record of war and gory conquests? Is the bloodstained history of crusades, genocides of countless pagan people any form of practical Christianity? What do the two world wars, recent bombing campaigns reveal? Who goads humanity to "murderous and self-destructive behaviour such as war"—the East or the West? Has the West practiced 'pacifism' in the post-Christian era? Where on the earth in principle is non-violence practiced? Is not it in India, and yet non-violence or 'ahimsa' in not our creed? We are warriors of the Light as symbolized in the Sword of Avatar.

Certainly, there is nothing non-violent in the acts of Sri Krishna. The seven hundred verses of the Gita do not goad a person to become a warmonger. The Gita or Hinduism is not simply a message of "tolerance" and "non-violence;" the cant words used by the media and politicians to hypnotize people into weakness and make them compromising tools in their nasty game of politics. In the 'Mahabharata,' it is clear that 'ahimsa' or non-violence, the highest law, 'paramo dharmah' is never intended for the Kshetriya. Lifting the veil of confusion wrapping 'ahimsa,' the Brahmin Kansika says: "When the earth is ploughed, numberless creatures lurking in the ground are destroyed. Fish preys upon fish; various animals prey upon other species. And some species even prey upon themselves... The earth and the air all swarm with living organisms, which are unconsciously destroyed by men from mere ignorance. Ahimsa was ordained of old by men who were ignorant of the true facts. There is not a man on the earth who is free from the sin of doing injury to creatures."¹⁸ There is also a humorous episode in the 'Devi Bhagavata' (skanda 41) in which Brihaspti (in the guise of Sukracharya) preaches "ahimsa

parmodharmah," to Asuras (not to Devas), so as to disarm them. "Even Jainism," as points out Michael Danino, "which made (ahimsa) the maxim one of its central teachings, allows monks to attain liberation by fasting to death—an undeniable act of himsa." As such, "there is nothing absolute about the much abused saying—ahimsa parmo dharmah."¹⁹

Discovering this Indian attitude, Sri Aurobindo pointed out the dangers and impracticability in the "Christian and Buddhistic doctrine of turning the other cheek to the smiter."²⁰ When Gandhi (in 1924) sent his son Devadas to Pondicherry, to sound Sri Aurobindo on non-violence. Sri Aurobindo simply replied, "suppose there is an invasion of India by the Afghans, how are you going to meet it with non-violence."²¹ The Christian and Buddhist doctrine of the "Cheek turned to the smiter is lip-profession of an ideal." It is "a gospel of cowards and weaklings. Babies and suckling may practice it, because they must but with others it is a hypocrisy."²² Non-violence or 'ahimsa' may be an individual choice under certain compulsions, but it is not a universally accepted principle of life and existence. In the middle of the second World War; when Britain along with her Allies were fighting the formidable Nazi wave; Gandhi ji wrote his famous open letter (1940) "to every Britain to lay down arms, because war is bad in essence." Gandhi ji wanted them "to fight Nazism without arms or with non-violent arms," inviting "Herr Hitler and signor Mussolini to take possession of your beautiful island."²³ What would have been the position of the world and the fate of humanity? Michel Dinino, rightly puts it, that Hitler "would have delighted had Britain followed such (Gandhi's) advice, just as Daryodhana would have been highly pleased to see Arjuna lay down his bow. But in both cases what would have been the result for mankind?"²⁴ Could we have stopped Chinese troops in 1962, if we had not used dharmic strength to stop the aggressor? What would have been our position, if we had followed Gandhi's 'advice' and fought with non-violent arms the Pakistani troops that occupied peaks in Kargil? How are we going to encounter many more Kargils to come with non-violent compromising attitude? Is not Gandhi's "advice" a moot point: to lay down arms and meet the enemy with non-violence and let brute force of hate take easily Kashmir; destroy peace and prosperity of the Punjab and fan violent flames of disintegration? The confused understanding of the principle of 'ahimsa,' its distorted interpretation and application has penetrated deep enough in the

and self-destructive behaviour such as war." And adding for good measure, Prof. Doniger felt proud-satisfaction: by saying "I am a pacifist. I don't believe in good wars." The skin-deep-consciousness, always revolves around the axis of senses; for "hardest thing," in the words of Emerson "is to think." Judging by the surface we arrive at partial and confused understanding of "The Song Celestial," like the Jain scriptures criticising Sri Krishna on much the same ground.

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Practical teaching of the Gita rejects non-violence as a creed. Non-violence, noble but an impotent creed is dangerous to practice in this age of Shakti. Just try to "resist a corrupt official" observes Michel Danino, "and a Kurukshetra opens in front of you; if a few villagers or tribals oppose a timber mafia, you will see a hundred Kuravas rise."²⁹ We have to be either the warriors of the Light or be exterminated by the trampling asuric force that slaughters, burns and pollutes. Our crises can be resolved, the impeding tragedy averted if we live the Gita and rise to Krishna-consciousness. Because, as Sri Aurobindo tells us, the Gita is "our national heritage, our hope for the future." We will recover or rediscover our heroism, courage and manly strength to face the enemy within and outside. Only we have to 'be conscious' like Arjuna that sin is weakness and ignorance that mere virtue doesn't make one pure. To think that mere good can result in absolute freedom from evil is a chimera of the mind. Let us pay heed to the thought-invigorating words of Swami Vivekananda, the echo of which is wafting like fragrance of vernal woods from the corridors of Time: "There is no sin in thee, there is no misery in thee; thou art the reservoir of omnipotent power. Arise, awake and manifest the divinity within."³⁰ Such is our 'dharma,' our real nature.

Has not this proxy-war thrust on us by our neighbour cost greater than the regular war? Has not our tolerance and abstinence instigated pak to resort to a greater destruction, perpetual violence and unending hate? It doesn't mean we prefer war, and think it is only preferred solution. Did not Sri Krishna go to Kuravas on a "last-ditch peace mission," asking simply five villages for Pandavas knowing before hand the outcome? The Gita lays most stress on "samata" at the same time goads to fight the adversary. The Lord said, "Have samta and seeking clearly the Truth fight..." Because, this 'battle is not fought outside only, but within and above too. "It is" as Sri Aurobindo points to his discerning disciple, "a spiritual battle inward and outward; by neutrality or compromise or even passivity one may allow the enemy force to pass and crush down the Truth and its children."³¹

India, where 'sattva' ought to be predominant and rule as a fearless flow of soul-power; carving its way and clearing obstacles in the emergence of the spiritual cycle of society—the sattwic race, ruled and governed by what is right, lawful and just in the working of creation. Therefore, let us awake, arise and fight. Let us shake off all bonds that bind us down, meet death face to face, without being caught in the tangles of dualities

of good and evil, sin and virtue, attraction and repulsion, success and failure. Even while fighting for truth and honour; serving the cause of justice, freedom and equality; our goal seems shadowy and dim, and we are forced by the principle of Necessity to raise the sword of discrimination against those whom we love as our kith and kin and are of the devil's party; we shall not hesitate like the awakened Arjuna to eliminate them. And marching with the flag of Victory towards the goal, India's spiritual mission is to destroy the very seeds of evil, which brood satanic legions encircling us.

Our problem is not violence or non-violence, but the victory of Truth. In his famous "Essays on the Gita," Sri Aurobindo summed up the whole problem in these soul-stirring words:

"We will use only soul-force and never destroy by war or any even defensive employment of physical violence. Good, though until soul-force is effective, the Asuric force in men and nations tramples down, breaks, slaughters, burns, pollutes, as we see it doing today, but then at ease and unhindered, and you have perhaps caused as much destruction of life by your abstinence as others by resort to force."

The anarchic conditions of the Nation, confusion in the international affairs are pregnant with unforeseen tragic-crises, and predict no good of humanity in the grip of insecurity and fear. In these fearful conditions Nation's truth and honour are at stake; enemy is roaming within, the hostile camps surround us, we cannot stand still and lay our arms. We shall be forced like Arjuna to plunge in the field and fight the battle for Light.

Let us bathe in the spirit of the Gita to energise our vital beings with its wisdom. Thus, can we visualize the body as a chariot in the battlefield; the senses or horses of this mysterious chariot are (as in our ordinary vitalistic mental consciousness) held by the doubtful and indecisive reins of Mind hypnotised and operated by the mechanism of Ego. We need self-discipline to replace the Ego and like Arjuna give the reins of the horses (in our total submission) in the hands of the Lord, the Master of all existence, seated in the Chariot. Then shall all our petty claims be hushed into silence. The warrior of the Light in us shall awake with his flaming

wife, no enemy, no desires, these are the illusion of senses; let me cultivate the Brahman-knowledge and let Ravana do what he will with the daughter of Janaka?"²⁸ In the battlefield the warrior acts, fights without any carving and attachment to the forms of virtue as well as attraction of sin.

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25. Ibid, p. 51
26. Ibid, p. 52
27. Essays on the Gita, p. 6.
28. Sri Aurobindo: "The Synthesis of Yoga, SABDA, 1971, p. 317.
29. Is Indian Culture Obsolete? p. 50.
30. The Complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Almora Advaita Ashrama, 1948, Vol. IV, pp. 105-106.
31. Letter on Yoga, pp. 665-666.

Chapter - X

THE BATTLE FOR LIGHT

The Gita springs like flames of the Vedic Fire out of the conditions that compel recurrence of war. The "horror of falsehood"¹ spread everywhere is ruling the world with its "law of darkness."² What Cain (in the Bible) did to his brother; man killing man is doing to the Earth everywhere. Accordingly, confusion, disorder, wastage and misery—the cause of social decay—are the factors responsible for decomposition of civilization. The war is not over. For, the seeds of two devastating wars altering the "political map of the earth"³ have sprouted in the shape of collective misdeeds and poisonous thoughts of people to shatter the global balance. It is possible now that to quote C.M. Joad with "a single match to set the hayrick alight and it will blaze again." Our deeds rebound on us. Law makes it that every action carries with it equal and opposite reaction. And:

"We build our future thought by thought,
Good and evil and know it not.
Thought is another name for fate,
Choose then thy destiny and wait."

The closing years of the twentieth century has brought mankind to a state of painful transition of acute conflict in human consciousness. The emerging dark-bright scenario of human civilization, like previous two world wars of shattering dimensions seem to repeat the grim and ghastly tragic tale of human destiny, and show what Dr. Radhakrishnan meant when he said: "All transitions belong to the realm of tragedy." We have witnessed the fall of communism and the communistic order, the development of the European community, and the resurgence of Islam. We also witness the revolt of civilisations against the cultural hegemony of the West. It presents a picture of the world in arms; an anarchic state of global consciousness, in which dollar diplomacy and business may

enter into a bleak winter, striking a death-knell to capitalism nay to all "isms." Science, catering to the interests of political diplomacy and commerce has enlarged million fold the capacity of man for evil and destruction. Instead of eliminating war, it has changed its character by ministering ingeniously to the art of collective massacre. Mankind has ill-adopted itself to its startling advancement in mechanising society and human relations. Outward diffusion of knowledge has not matched with the inner discovery of man. There are inner-crises in consciousness. Humanity has remained puerile, vulgar, crude and narrow within egocentric bonds and shackles of party and community. The cleft in consciousness is due to the cultural disintegration. Consequently, man suffers from a loss of identity and inward loneliness, groaning under a kind of neurosis like a way worn wanderer of yore. In the whirl of life's cares, anxieties, worries he can't stand and stare for as Wordsworth laments:

"World is too much with us late and soon,
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers,
Little we see in Nature what is ours,
We have given our hearts away to a sordid boon."

Commercially greased mechanical society in which humanity fret and fume in the race of "getting and spending" is almost gripped by the tentacles of militant-materialism. The titanic moods of Imperialism, fanaticism of fundamentalists have divided the world into apparently irreconcilable camps. A large question mark (?) hangs over the landscape of humanity like a malignant star in the distant horizon. The conflict ensuing out of the criss-cross tendencies of the world is between Islam-Western Christian World, between Islam and the Confucion world and between Islam-Hindustan. This is what dominates our thoughts and emotions, and not the goal of humanity as a family of nations, cooperating each other in peace and freedom.

Our beloved earth is being threatened to annihilation by the ambitiously avaricious forces within the nations, in political parties and communities and sects. How can wars be eliminated as long as the "diplomatic hypocrisy" of politicians persists? Do not their "self-deception" delude, mislead and exploit masses when they put on variegated masks of specious idealism to hide their serpent hearts with flowery smiles? While

playing the game of politics, they juggle with masks of reasons and sentiments; hardly comprehending that their pretence and duplicity are like sparks to ignite wars and violent revolutions. The cause of strife: national egoism, commercial ambitious, rivalries, hunger and self-assertions generate fear psychosis; so much so that each nation distrusts all other, and to out do others national armies swell, defense budgets bulge at the cost of acute economic crisis, social insecurity and unrest. Because, in man:

"As long as intellect's outward gazing sight
Serves earthly interest and creature joy,

So long—

An incurable littleness pursues his days.
Life is the same insect, ape and man,
Its stuff unchanged, its way the common root."

With the collapse of the U.S.S.R., the context of the CTB has been strangled to death. The idea of nuclear non-proliferation is a cry in wilderness. Not only Pakistan and Iraq clandestinely have managed to raise their heads as nuclear weapons states; the newly independent states of former Soviet Union also provide a good example of the danger of proliferation. Ukraine at this moment possesses the world's third largest nuclear arsenal, enough to eliminate life of this planet several times over. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan managed to retain their nuclear weapons. The second tier nuclear weapons states – China, France and United Kingdom are frantic in their race to modernize their nuclear arsenals. Are there any signs to show that these nations desire a nuclear-free world and ensure a durable peace?

The events in the erstwhile Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China have given a shattering blow to socialism, devoid of democracy and civil liberties. It is a sign of danger, an apprehension of nuclear weapons falling into the wrong hands—be it leftiest or Right wing, Islamic or non-Islamic. Perhaps, the inflammable point is reached like the boiling caldron of two world wars, into which Europe "flung in three years the resources of decades." The centralizing efforts of war and militarism of Nations, their

war preparations and prolonged antagonism can brew war and jeopardize our dreams of world union. The creed of Bolshevism, once again puts on its fierce appearance under the covers of long-ripening ambitions, jealousy and hatreds to fish in the troubled waters; take advantage, and lay hold for a while on the life of humanity.

The stark mechanical civilization of Europe with its approved device of 'salvation' by machinery is heading towards an age of heartless robots with terrible firepower that exceeds the past barbarism in exterminating humanity. Already, like the Indian evil perversion of caste system; the growing racism in a multicultural Europe has shaken her democratic foundations. It has turned her organizations and institutions into hollow centres of culture and education. The evil of racism has worldwide repercussions on economic crises and social unrest. The pseudo-casteism, misconstrued racism are inflammable fuel to fan the flames of destruction. European racism with her long tradition of euro centrism carries a long history of the conquest, enslavement, colonization and genocide of Africans, Asians and other indigenous people. The seeds of war are latent in the subconscious mind of the race. Can these seeds be destroyed as long as elite forms of racism, reproduced from top to bottom continue to flourish in the soil of ignorance and falsehood? Racism, ethnocentrism or ethnic intolerance are the force of darkness; they complicate social, cultural, political problems, leading virtually to conflict among races; a war to prove one's supremacy.

The times are out of joints; the modern civilization is in the jaws of narco-terrorism that has let loose the sons of Belzibab, who recycle narco-dollars into the western arms merchants dealing with lethal weapons used by various insurgent groups in the world. The worse part of it is the increasing control of the narco-terrorism over judiciary, politics and economy for accelerating the worldwide production of illicit drugs many times higher than the previous levels. Humanity amidst "harassed toil and welter of cares"⁵ is caught in a whirl of forces other than that make for growth and progress. It has reached a point of general tensions, ready to break open the wall of resistance and make way through seas of sorrow. "Nature," in the words of Sri Aurobindo, "uses such means, apparently opposed and dangerous to her intended purpose, to bring about the fruition of that purpose."⁶ For "what is the use," observes the Mother, "spending billions to perfect some bombs if you are not to use

them." Again, "what is the use of discovery that you can destroy a city in a few minutes, if not to destroy it? One wants to see the fruit of one's effort. If there is a war that is what will happen."⁷ Moreover, it is the "dreadful strategy" of the Eternal to use the flaming sword:

"To break
A dead resistance in mortal's heart,
His slow inertia as of living stone."

The earth is shaken by the misdeeds of her children. The very foundation of the human civilization is under tremor of volcanic eruptions with its *raison de etre* in "a terrible fit of political and social epilepsy" as the Mother puts it, "through which the most dangerous forces of destruction do their work."⁸ Sri Aurobindo pointed out that it is a period "of decomposition" working on a global scale and coming to the pitch where character becomes destiny. To the Greek poets, the individual and the national tragedies originate out of "hubris," the insolence of pride crossing the limits of Justice. History unfolds the downfall of kingdoms because of this fatal flaw in the character and workings of kings and emperors: Did not the Pharaohs of Egypt, the rulers of Greece, the emperors of Persia, the Caliphs of Baghdad, the Popes of Mediaeval Rome create their own bleak world, a nemesis, that:

"...denied the eternal Truth,
In the vain braggart freedom of its thought."⁹

What about the modern Nations labouring under the same fallacy in competing to win leadership in military power with diabolical weapons of incomparable firepower? Is not this competition in lethal race dragging humanity (encircled with suspicion, insecurity, distrust and fear) to a brink of disaster?

It is an irony of fate that militarism and commercialism have "united in a loving clasp, coalescing into a sacred biune duality of national life and patriotic aspiration and causing and driving by their force the most irrational, the most monstrous and nearly cataclysmic; the highest war of modern and indeed of all historic times."¹⁰ H.G. Wells, writing before the latest developments in nuclear weapons, prophetically observed: "A frightful queerness has come into life. Hitherto, events have been held together

by a certain logical consistency as the heavenly bodies have been held together by golden cord of gravitation. Now it is as if the cord had vanished, and everywhere is driven anyhow, anywhere at a steadily increasing velocity."¹¹ Science, Socialism, Courts, the United Nations and its organizations find themselves no where in their futile efforts to make war physically impossible for, "the battle-fury of man is superior to the fury of his death-dealing engines."¹² It is so, as "the Socialist, the Syndicalist, the internationalist of yesterday stands forward as a banner bearer in the great mutual massacre and his voice is the loudest to cheer the dogs of War."¹³ Arming nuclear weapons with moral passions is a frightful combination to lead human race to death and destruction. Already, this combination obliterated (on 6th August 1945) Hiroshima – a city of 300,000 inhabitants, who knows that the Gulf War was a Prologue that has sown the seeds of an Epilogue – a tragedy of shattering dimensions?

At this juncture of Humanity's crises of faith, religion and secular democracy could have been a ray of light, a way of life to grow out of narrow national feelings, to the world union and global consciousness. Notwithstanding, religious freedom, secular democracy—in the historical past, as well in our present times – have been an aberration, disturbing peace in different societies. In relation to the contemporary challenge of fundamentalism; the future of secularism and pluralism, looks weak and uncertain; because of tenacious persistence of religious intolerance and discrimination on individual and global level. The grouped fundamentalists have consolidated themselves with their religion of sword; posing a threat of disintegration to all democratic institutions that uphold the principle of identity in separateness against the dogma of uniformity. The unholy alliance of the custodians of religion; the dark forces working through fundamentalists, narco-terrorism, politicians, ambitious military generals; inflicting unending suffering on humanity are the forces working against world unity of "human family" in a "global Village". Devoid of democratic sense, these forces employ a variety of parochialism and religious symbols to bring about chaos. The ideological cold war is not so dangerous, as this new cold war between fundamentalism on the one hand and secularism, nationalism and global unity on the other.

In the scheme of universe, man as an evolutionary being is superior to both gods and asuras. Both, gods and asuras are entangled "in eternal struggle for the mastery of the three worlds."¹⁴ And in this 'struggle,' they

cannot continue their hold on earth without the help and active participation of man. It is, because of man's earthly constitution, his external mind and vital is under the complete sway of the asuras and the gods stationed in the region of higher mind and heart can have an indirect influence on humanity. Therefore, the divine part of man remains dormant, while the greater part in him is dominated by the asuric arrogance, vanity and egoism. Now, the portion of humanity, controlled by dark asuric force is driven fanatic with its mumbo-jumbo religion of worn out beliefs and hackneyed dogmas that it imposes on others through force and sword.

The part of humanity, living in ignorance; dealing in all sort of falsehoods, refusing to march with the light of wisdom; either fall back to an infra-consciousness, or else are eliminated, abolished like other species in the course of universal history. The type of humanity – an explosive mixture of intolerance, rage and hatred – trying to find in the life of their prophet, approval and indeed precedent for war of fanatic fundamentalism against faiths of all kinds, and higher destiny of man are not only tarnishing the vision of the religion of Peace, but are labouring under false impression that they are the true believers on earth to rule the misbelievers or infidels. Will not in this clash of Light-Darkness those who are benighted or ill willed, intolerant, fierce, burning in hate be destroyed and sink into the lowest pit of the universe? Has not the Gita prophesied it?

"In the egoism of their strength and
Power, in the violence of their
Wrath and arrogance, they (the
Asuric men) hate, despise and
Belittle the God hidden in them
And God in man... Deluded birth
And birth, they find Me not and
Sink down into the lowest status
Of social-nature (16:18-20)."

India, the experimental land of the Divine has been the habitat of a colourful humanity as a manifestation of the multi-mooded Reality, expressing and embodying uniquely its collective soul-consciousness that is growing and evolving as the child of Earth in the bonds of creation.

It is from pre-historic times India had sown the seeds of divine democratic principle of unity in diversity, or diversity steadily evolving and manifesting the unity of soul and the principle of harmony in individual and collective life. Dwindling and diminishing of this lofty principle of Harmony in its essence and spirit marked the downfall of India. Instead, it gave place to a lip-worship of ritual and ceremony; missing the sublime, symbolic evocation of forms and geometrical signs and words of occult mystery and the ultimate spiritual vision they convey. Diverse philosophies, religious groups that have opened the Pandora's box of confusion of controversies, steadily ripening into present day daggers drawn situation of brothers.

The moment Hindustani separates from the Light of Truth; he is lost into blind allies by severing his bonds (at the cost of tremendous suffering) with the soul of the Land. The soul of the Land is the cultural flame of Knowledge-Truth-Bliss lit in the mountain caves and forest glades by the ancient poet-seers and is kept alive and cherished from age to age by the ministerial of Love. In the blind alleys of Ignorance is lost the secret clue of a golden democratic order. The loss of the truth of our being; consequent separation from the Light of divine consciousness made us hollow of 'Shakti' or truth-force that enthuses a person the power to strive, conquer and not to yield. But living in a world of half-light and half-truth dealing in falsehood; we have lost our memory i.e. 'smariti' of the Soul consciousness; the revealed Word of 'Sruti,' the "Omniscient Ecstasy," i.e. the consciousness of divinity and truth within and outside.

'Avidya' or Ignorance imprisoned us in the groves of separative consciousness. It has bred hostile powers of anti-Indian attitude bent on to extinguish her psycho-spiritual culture. Hostile powers have encircled us from within and outside foreshadowing some storm of catastrophic nature. These malicious powers, in their titanic revenge destroy, exploit and torture both man and Nature – the real temples of God. They are to quote Sri Aurobindo: "limited in knowledge and open to error, but in revolt against the Truth or in the habit of seizing the Truth only to pervert it."¹⁵ The Asuras, the Evil forces, inhabiting the human forms also exist in the super physical world, as has been experienced since the days of the Veda, Zoroaster, the mysteries of Egypt, the Cabbala and in Europe. Acting from above, they come down to earth and incarnate in human forms as "powers of Darkness" to dispute with the powers of Light. The

Asuras acting through human forms are "very religious, very fanatical about their religion, very strict about the rules of ethical conduct. There are others who use spiritual ideas without believing in them to give them a perverted twist and delude. It is what Shakespeare described, as Devil quoting scripture for his own purpose."¹⁶

Shall India die then? No, India embodying truth-light, spiritual wisdom cannot die as has been assured by her great Seers. Death of Truth-Light or 'ritam joytir' is not possible; yet the Darkness imprisoning it in the rock of Inconsciousness is a challenge to the Soul of India and a call for the Intervention. The soul of India that has come out of centuries hangover of foreign domination is like a flame-child, ready to tease wise men out of thought; face the challenge to enact the colloquy of Kurukshetra. This is a Herculean task for all human strength; as the "crooked powers of the falsehood and ignorance," the enemies of 'yajna' and yoga are hard bent to "set their false knowledge, their false strength, will and works against the true knowledge, true strength, will and works of the gods."¹⁷ In the ascending flames of 'yajna' symbolize "the high aspiring song of Humanity."¹⁸ It is humanity caught in the struggle between the Devas, the sons of Light and Immortality and

"Titan and demoniac agencies,
That aggrandise earth-nature and disframe."¹⁹

In the "coils of darkness" the 'enemies' have veiled our Soul-knowledge, Soul-Power and the "possibility of divine existence and divine action."²⁰ The 'yajna' for the rishi is the power of the Divine word to raise the shining seers and heroes to fight for us. Otherwise, these haters of Light, the worshippers of a "black pitiless image of power"²¹ with their "ruthless force,"²² and "iron moods" shall make humanity weak and ignorant and force it to live and wallow in a—

"... world of sorrow and hate.
Sorrow with hatred for its lonely joy,
Hatred with others sorrow as its feast."²³

Do Indians want that their spiritual wisdom; the culture of freedom of thought, joy of living in health and happiness be destroyed by the "sting of murderous spite and hate and lust" and be replaced by a "demonic

cult" in which "Heaven's face" shall become a "mask and snare of Hell"? Are they courageous enough to be kindled into the 'dharmic' consciousness and take up their challenge; clutch the flaming sword to expel, overpower and slay the "artificers of Nature's fall and pain,"²⁴ trying to erect the "chapel of iniquity"²⁵ to lock the "door of God,"

"... With keys of creed

And shut out by the Law his tireless Grace."²⁶

The problems with which world is infested are epitomized by the ancient-Hind; the country inhabited by a cross-section of humanity, striving with different religious beliefs, cultural habits to live and grow in harmony of the truth-light like planets revolving around the Sun. Bharat, unlike the Western nations is an attitude of the spirit, a way of life; an evolving circumference of divine consciousness enveloping humanity in the arms of Love, so that each knows that one's nation and home is 'bhuvan triyam,' the three worlds at large.

The crisis in which the world is tossing like a way-worn bark in some stormy sea is reflected in the ebb and flow of Indian consciousness. If the malady of disunity and racial hate is cured in India; the crisis resolved within us, it shall naturally help in resolving global crises and pave a way for a new world order. For, India is not a mere geographical isolation, a political suzerainty; but a play field for the "sun-eyed children" of the future Dawn. The people living in the lap of Mother India, (irrespective of their religions, languages and customs) have a common destiny; a common goal of universal brotherhood and attainment of divine perfection:

"A world of lovelier forms lies near to ours,
Where, undisguised by earth's deforming sight,
All shapes are beautiful and all things true."²⁷

Our goal is so shadowy and dim. Our every step forward is a fierce and relentless battle against the "opponent Snake"²⁸ determined to cement life and society with "rigid standardization." This adversary Force, born of old is the -

"Invader of the life of mortal man,
It hides from him the straight immortal path."

It works in and through human 'asuras' who mask themselves as true religious-priest preachers and lovers of God only to obstruct Divine-Knowledge, spiritual freedom and unending perfection of human species and earth environment. Their service of man or God is a cloak to cover their hidden hellish lusts, or a means for the indulgence of strong will and personality they seek to impose on the world:

"Nature they fill with evil's institutes,
Turn into defects the victories of Truth
Proclaim as falsehoods the eternal laws,
And load the dice of Doom with wizard lies,
The world's shrines they occupied, usurped its thrones."²⁹

In the Indian Context, the battle for Light carries the occult and spiritual dimensions. The turmoil outside signifies what is going within. The physical crises and conflicts simply reflect the storms that blow behind the screen. According to the Vedic terminology, the 'serpent' of the Bible, the Arch Enemy of mankind's progressive evolution, the demoniac forces are called 'Dasa-Dasyus,' Panis: the powers of physical and spiritual darkness. They are the human enemies; the destructive forces of madness that stand over both the God-Seekers and gods. The Arch Enemy in its perversion of intolerance hates the principle of diversity becoming Unity as the unity is always in diversity. So the Enemy has let loose the militant groups like pack of wild wolves in the human form. These regimented set of tigers; young and beautiful are fierce, ruthless, strong and powerful. The *raison d'être* of these fixed types of beings is to banish, destroy and mutilate the creations of a free soul—art, poetry, literature, sweetness and light hidden in stones, the good and noble in the world cultural treasure. In their fanaticism, they want to revert to the dark ages of barbarism, illiteracy, ignorance and poverty. So we see that in this world's arms bazaar, humanity is cuddled in fear as the arms are rattling everywhere. As such, humanity is waiting in a nerve-shattering uncertain curiosity, not knowing that warmongering militants are waiting for the war drums to roll and bring the imminent holocaust. Does it mean, the "homa kunda," the Urn of oblation is again ablaze with whirling flames to repeat "the colloquy at Kurukshetra" and "liberate humanity"? ³⁰ The conflict between the forces of union and harmony vis-

a-vis the forces of disintegration, separation and division is intensifying, finding a momentum, a headlong towards a decisive battle for the Light.

India is a nation in crisis. Like a rudderless ship tossed and driven by political, economic, social factors is stuck in the stormy tides of crime and corruption to be driven towards dangerous deeps. Her saving sails – democracy, Socialism, Secularism and non-alignment – are all in various stages of collapse. Devoid of spiritual grace, the experiment of democracy has been a cult of incompetence. The growing clout of money power in elections has eroded the acceptability, credibility and legitimacy of our democratic system. The caste, religious factors, the myth of Minorityism are used and exploited by the pseudo-secularists in the game of vote-bank elections. Does secularism mean, “to keep down the Hindus” and go “against Hinduism”? Is not such anti-democratic, anti-national attitude itself harmful to minorities? Has not this “pro-pak vote” polity ministered a deadly dose of communalism, and the myth of minorityism diluted the nationalist spirit by turning democracy into a mobocracy of gonda raj moving towards a catastrophe on a global scale? Are we going back to Jihads and Crusaders?

Communalism does not benefit the members of religious community whose interests it claims to defend and promote, because communalism is ingrained in irrationality, hatred, intolerance and obscurantism – the forces working against man's higher destiny. Moreover, the end of minority/majority communalism is either separation or fascism. Unfortunately, when the state machinery becomes fascist, a war like situation crops up to inflict untold suffering on masses. Just as in Italy and Japan, the chief victims of fascism were Italians and Japanese. Likewise, in Germany, not only the Jews but the Germans were the chief victims. So in India too, all communities too bore the burnt of the flames of communalism engulfing country at the time of partition and (God forbid), who knows that the greater conflagration is not far behind? The foresight of Jawaharlal Nehru struck a warning, when in July 1937; he wrote to Khaliquzzaman, “Do you not see that this communal policy which the Muslim League here has fathered is a policy more injurious to the Muslims of India than anything that a majority could do would be. It is a doomed policy both from the point of view of the community and the larger world.” Again, in December 1954, referring to the intense communalism of the Akali Dal, Nehru wrote: “If these ideas spread, India

will no doubt suffer, but the Sikhs will obviously suffer most of all." If the political polity of appeasement and opportunism continues to add fuel in the myth of Minorityism, the growing communalization of the Indian Polity shall force the majority to take up the sword for the final and decisive war of Kurukshetra. For the growing communal hatred has hardened into fundamentalism refusing to move with the spirit of the age. It has turned religion a prison of dogmas.

A steady growing nexus between politicians, bureaucracy and 'goonda' elements whipping up communal passions are the enemies of democracy, working against the principles of secularism. Deluded by the glitter of dollar and goods and toys of comfort of the mechanical civilization of the West; they like restless apes mimic and produce a "lumpen" religion of lumpen adherents with no roots in real religiosity. Their Altar is ballet-box and their God the state power. When we see how these politicians have made a triple mockery of temple, mosque and democracy by making a temple and mosque the road to ballet, we are reminded of Nirad Chaudhuri's hand of the "Great Anarch" who lets the curtain fall, "And Universal Darkness buries all," the "dead empire, chaos is restored."

The enemy in the religious garb is more terrific and catastrophic compared to Godless ideology of Nazism and communism. Because, it is a battle for Light – the "deva-denava Sangram," a battle between the elements of truth (in the working of democracy and spiritual secularism, in life and Nature) that seek to gain ascendancy, and the elements of falsehood, alarmed at the prospect of losing a subject of their rule. Therefore:

"A battle is joined between the true and false,
A pilgrimage sets out to the divine Light."³¹

The 'savabva' of India and her 'prakriti' is to maintain peace at the heart of storm; yet in her calm strength, there is a "power of Silence in the depths of God." That is her 'prakriti,' the true 'savaba,' and the quality of her heroic character that shall never allow India to keep neutral and avoid War. The politicians – weakened by the slogans of ahimsa – may go on compromising at every step with national interests, by appeasing those elements that are mortal enemies of the three godheads of Democracy; yet the time will come when she breaks all bonds and

plunges in the righteous war. A all round neutrality to avoid war is a gross mistake when it is thrust on us and also goes against the true nature of the heroic country.

The truth is that this ancient Hind has her own particular manner of thinking and living unlike the imperialist habit and methods of western democracies. Whenever her aptitude, the bent of the soul towards which she must move shall be opposed or attempts are made to annihilate it; there will be no India then. Do we want to be purchased or destroyed by the Dollar-bosses? Is "the shine of the Dollar the light of Life"? We have to discriminate! India has survived when her children lived by the instinct of a secret Godhead, that inspires and enlightens them time to time, more than the limited human knowledge that cuts up Reality into bits, stiffens into what Edmond Taylor calls "Nothing-but-ism."

Do not we want to emerge strong and be heroic? If so, then we have to be true to our 'dharma' or nature by accepting, assimilating all that is noble and grand in the Western Civilization, and at the same time safeguarding ourselves from the "enslaving gold-exploiters."³² This India can do when her children are able to "infuse the spiritual élan that is hers into the fumbling idealism of the younger generation of the U.S."³³ Even so, if the war is thrust on us it would be an act of cowardice to sit on the fence, like a "mild-Hindu" allowing False Man triumph and annual everything catholic, progressive, rational and democratic. "No matter" writes K.D. Sethena, "how long for convenience's sake we stand the outside the Armageddon, we might finally have to plunge into it with the name of Sri Krishna on our lips,"³⁴ for such is our nature and cultural nourishment. We share with America, England and France, the principles that sustain democracy; yet we are unlike Europe in our seeing no fissure or cleft in matter and spirit. Therefore, there is no question of rendering God what is God's and Caesar's what is Caesar's as everything is evolving divinity, and both the Maker, and the Made are reverse and obverse of the golden coin of reality. We have no imperialist habit to dominate and exploit nations. Ours is a cultural conquest, a spiritual Victory, a life divine on the transformed earth. Therefore, in tune with our cultural principles we are "definitely anti communism," and "no Indian can be simultaneously a communist and a patriot;"³⁵ for we don't live for bread alone as behind the material sheath there are many layers of consciousness.

The monster of religious hate and communalism has set the reign of terror in motion. The terrorists are playing their shots in the world. We are a land of natural warriors. The pages of our history don't make people shudder with crusades and Jihads. They waft aroma of heroism sublime and exemplary deeds of heroes fighting for earth's salvation and not for greed or religious creed. Fighting wars for cruel delight or for petty interests is 'adharmaic' and we are no warmongers. We wait and watch and strain every nerve to avoid war with Pakistan, our neighbour and part of us, trying his utmost to put us in a helpless state. When patience is exhausted, a bursting point is reached and there appears the eternal pilgrim, the roaring Himalayan lion to shake the unshakable, burn the enemies and spread abroad Equality, Truth and Love in the world.

Pakistan – a piece hacked from the body of the helpless Hind – is a bleeding wound on the body of Mother India and the agony of her soul. The peace conferences, negotiations, compromises and our lukewarm-attitude of sluggishness shall only worsen the wound with an unbearable pain causing decay in the Nation's economic, social and political health. The Body has to become whole with a healing touch after the final 'devadanaya Sangram;' the battle for Light is concluded. Are not Pakistan's communal hatred, religious bigotry and delusions of grandeur, autocratic ambition an image of a False Man? Are not these characteristics of the False Man, the very psychological dynamics of Islamic fundamentalism, working against world union and international peace? Pakistan, founded on what Pandit Nehru called a "pernicious doctrine" of a fanatic Islamic state has crippled the wings of secularism and is hell-bent to throttle the budding spirit of the three godheads of democracy – Equality-Freedom-Fraternity. Pandit Nehru's accurate observation would have been a precaution to our weak-kneed compromising power-greedy politicians that war-minded Pakistan has set up the slogan: "First Kashmir, then Patiala and then Delhi." Her utterly unjustifiable position in Kashmir clears her attitude, which will never allow a just solution. Sardar Patel's penetrating eyes could discern the activity of the groups in Pakistan openly declaring their wish to fly the green flag not only over Srinagar (which they have by dragging minority Hindus out of their habitats) but also over Delhi.

Pakistan's conditioned attitude, her policy towards India is based on extreme communalism; her marked hatred for Hindus is the "very

ideology precludes the principle of live and let live."³⁶ Suffering from an acute fear-complex, Pakistan shall never cease to act perfidiously, as she is all the time preparing for war at a 'feverish tempo.' The basic difficulty of the situation, as Pandit Nehru clearly put it in his broadcast, "is that the policy of a religious and communal state followed by the Pakistan government inevitably produces a sense of lack of full citizenship and a continuous insecurity among those who do not belong to the majority of community. That policy leads to hatred and violence and produces conflict," so that neighbours are at daggers drawn in battlefield that is both physical and psychological.

Pakistan-torn-apart of Mother India, a sacred land of Indus-Saraswati civilization; has become a breeding place of terrorism, infested with demons spreading terror and death in their fear and frustration "The Muslim world," observes Andrew Sullivan, the former Editor of *The New Republic*, "has been on the losing side of history" as turning of religion into terrorism is a "reminder of the eclipse of Islam in the modern world." Consequently, "they are terrified by failure and of the Godless world they believe is about to engulf or crush them. Hence the odd phenomenon of Islamic extremism, beginning in earnest." The suicide-squads strategy contains a suppressed infra-rational "awful logic of terrorism" behind "the very psychological dynamics that lead repressed homosexuals to be viciously homophobic or that entice sexually tempted preachers to inveigh against immorality are the very dynamics that lead vodka-drinking fundamentalists to steer planes into buildings. It is not designed to achieve anything, construct anything, argue anything."³⁷ It is a violent acting out of internal conflict of the obdurate ignorance of perverted mind, too weak to fight the evolving global war of culture in cultural terms.

The position of India is like an oasis in a surrounding desert of savagery. She cannot live without the love of her children of different hues, thoughts and expression symbolizing humanity in its onward march. She can survive and continue the ordered march, if she does carve her way through this desert of savagery. In the "epic history of nations" She is Mahabharata, the Greater India, an enactment of the human drama with an unending past with stupendous energy, evolving to reveal the dazzling noons that shall excel the gleaming dawns of the past. We are at parting of the ways. India has not spoken her final word. In this period

of transition we are in a whirl of crises similar to the time of Sri Krishna, when the war of righteousness was waged between the human instruments of gods and titans. War like disease and awful calamities are strokes of the Evil incarnate to "bar the descent of the divine power."³⁸ In 'dharma-yuddha' of Kurukshetra, it was the power and presence of Sri Krishna, working out the global plan of establishing the kingdom of 'dharma' by "transmuting the fearful tendencies of the vital into its true Sattwik turn." As Sri Krishna with his message of the Gita on the battlefield, initiated the "New Age," so when the World War I broke in august 1914, Sri Krishna expanding and embodying in Sri Aurobindo; proclaimed on 15th August of the same year his spiritual message of a divinised humanity – a challenge to the Arch Enemy – in the first number of his Review, the 'Arya.'

Again, in World War II (1939), the Evil Force reincarnated with its dark body "across the path of the divine Event." It was a moment of great crises; the fate of mankind, the future of the world rested on the outcome of war. Sri Aurobindo – the expanding Krishna-Consciousness and the spirit and form of Indian Nationalism – "received into his own body this stroke of thunder, this all-out invasion of the Evil Force upon earth in order that the earth be saved. Otherwise, it would have been beyond the capacity of any earthy power to hold at bay this invincible Force."³⁹ For such is the part of God's labour of digging deep and long in the mud and mire, and by–

"Accepting error, sorrow, death and pain
It pays the ransom of the ignorant Night,
Redeeming by its substance Nature's fall."⁴⁰

The "brutal behaviour" and "callous intransigence of Pakistan has provided us a casus belli," and "when" and "where" of the war is an occult working. India's politics is 'spirituality' and its victory in the form of a divinised global family. The spiritual vision is not a pacifist's creed of absolute non-violence. It is the age of Shakti; the fire of Time Spirit of Mahabharata is again blazing high. And spirituality, the soul of Indian democracy doesn't reject anything; nor aims at escape from the battlefield. The call of Time Spirit for the present makes "Buddhist blood" and "Gandhi's non-violence" out of place, as it drains and dries all heroism and pluck most needed for our survival as civilized nation. Talking of

peace or non-violence to the raksha in man is a sign of cowardice, as the animal and titan in man understands the language in its own terms. The soul of spirituality is to be a free dweller in Infinity and dig out good and kindness in the evil and cruelty in creation. Wars and strifes drill the Matter and sometimes are used as churning of evil in man and Nature. It is:

"The dangerous pain of life's experiment."⁴¹

The 'experiment' that turns battlefields into "schools of heroism," awakens and trains "the heroic in man,"⁴² the invincible strength and power of the Vital or Prana-Shakti: War and strife put us to trail and test; awake faith and 'dharmic-shakti,' infuse us with courage, energy, strength to master ourselves in order to master the world. To abandon life for the cause of Truth is heroic. And Truth is a battle for Light. So:

"This Violent cruel play is His

Whom you call the God of Kindness, the God of Love,

Why does he do so, why does he revel in this Violent battle..."⁴³

Christ and Buddha, sages and saints have come and gone but it is Rudra, the fierce and terrible that still holds world in hallow of his hands. Do those made tipsy by the wine of spiritual lust experience the burning truth of the country and comprehend that "Vishnu and Rudra are one body" and the two "limbs" of Mother India? According to the law of probability, the law of Vishnu (Love-Peace-Joy) cannot prevail in the midst of bombs and war hungry terrorists until the debt to the fierce Rudhra is paid. Because, in the very "fount of kindness," a flaming sword of transformation leaps,

"And the cruel slayer Kalki are one and the same Incarnation."⁴⁴

This mighty effort of Sri Krishna is an expansion of His Conscious-Force in the person of Sri Aurobindo, culminating to consummate with the conclusion of the parable of evolution. At present man in a transition - encircled by the forces of falsehood has to evolve and complete the cycle. In a highly spiritual sense, our "Nationalism is an

Avatar" epitomising the destiny of India, linked with the purpose of creation in the earth's history. Our Nationalism is a sum-total of difficulties, aspirations and sufferings of humanity "wrapped in mortal poverty." And as the Mother attests: "In the whole creation the earth has a place of distinction, because unlike any other planet it is evolutionary with a psychic entity at its centre. In it, India is particular, a divinely chosen country."⁴⁵

India's spirituality is the churning of the Vedic Fire, the power to undertake the most "terrible work," 'ghore karmani' of the Gita. The Avatarhood, an evolving vision of Nationalism is God's Conscious-Force, that stands always to subdue the evildoers and to carve way for a leap into the dazzling noons of the future. Nationalism has to be energized like a human body being charged by the descending conscious Force. This spirituality is the inward Vastness of Sri Krishna; stupendous spiritual power that can "join to the energy of the atom the Shakti of the Atman"⁴⁶ and lead the world. Otherwise, the ground is lost to the hostile powers. Therefore, "wars can like Kurukshetra" as Sri Aurobindo observes, "be a way to rid the earth of a domineering or destructive race so that justice and right may reign." Nature, too adopts her ways to weed out, eliminate all that hinders, bars the growth, and is unnecessary as sings the poet-seer in 'Savitri':

"All that denies must be torn out and slain"

As in destruction is "felt creation's hasty pace" and

"...loss as the price of a celestial gain,
And hell as a short cut to heaven's gates."⁴⁷

The Earth is in agony. Hindu-Humanity involved in the Inconscience of Nature; imprisoned (as in a dark dungeon) within politically tarnished national and religious ideologies - "is awaiting its hour of God," because "a greater power than Evil" must born on earth to execute the "God-given work." Not for nothing, Nostradamus, the French Jewish-Seer, four hundred years ago, predicted that the "Hindu hero will march from his' base"⁴⁸ to rescue and regenerate mankind. And, we know:

"He always comes down shaking the unshakable;
He turns round his spear and hurls it head foremost into the hidden
bottom of the ocean."⁴⁹

The Avatar the "eternal warrior," a flaming force, is a "decisive action direct from the supreme," who has already promised in these soul-stirring words:

"I shall rise; I shall rise, in the fire of my mighty rage,
I shall burn the enemies and spread abroad,
Equality, Truth and Love in the world."

Perhaps, the "hour" is drawing near, the time is approaching when the 'hero' wrapped in whirlwind and tempest shall burst upon oppressors of humanity and destroy them. The Avatar is the soul and form of Nationalism, an enveloping global consciousness, stretching its arms to embrace universe. In the words of Nostradamus; marching with the strength of a conquerors' Sword; he will make a bloody onslaught, leading India with his titanic fight in a "holy war":

"Conquering the clouds and seas ice,
All enemies will fall before his lance"⁵⁰

So that:

"Truth, Light, Love, Beauty and Happiness,
The religion of the name of the seas triumphs."⁵¹

In this clamatic hour of human transition, when the battle for Light is to be fought for the victory of Truth, "What we must pick up," exclaims K.D. Sethena, "is not the politician's pen but the sword of Bhavani,"⁵² for the hour is terrible and the earth's yearning and cry cannot go for nothing. The culminating scene of the divine drama is yet to be staged. The hour when -

"The galloping hooves of the unforeseen event,
Shall bear the superhuman rider near -

And

"... break the iron-law,
And change Nature's doom by lone spirit's power."

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...For Hindu means eclectic spiritual consciousness in quest of truth and search for all-knowledge and world-knowledge that is all comprehensive and all absorbing. In the consciousness of Divinity within, it absorbs all orations and philosophies, holds the adherents of different faiths in a mutual bond of common brotherhood. To be Hindu or Hindustani is to be multi-dimensional in realization that holds in its sure embrace the spiritual and material, the esoteric and exotic, rational and ultra rational in a harmonic order that leads in the making of an integral man. Thus it is:

"Man must change who is the soul of Time,
His gods too change and live in larger light."